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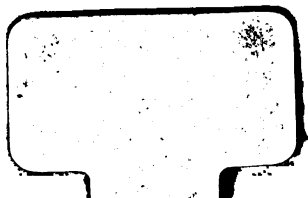
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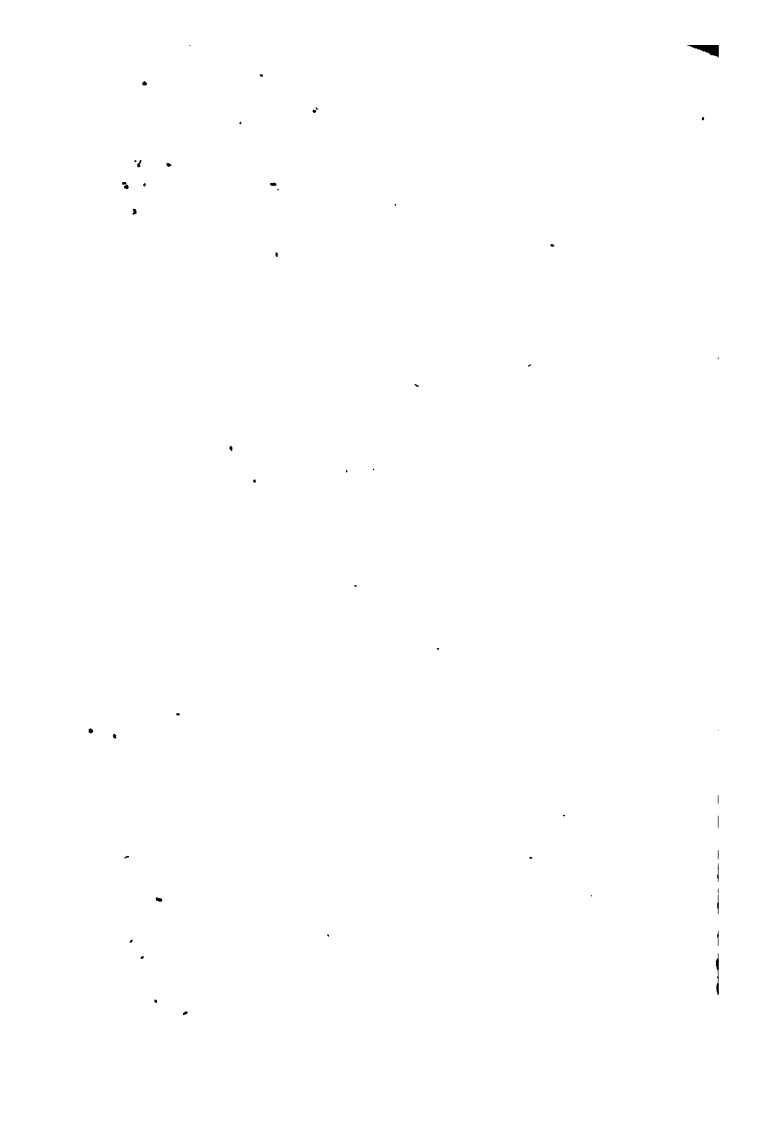
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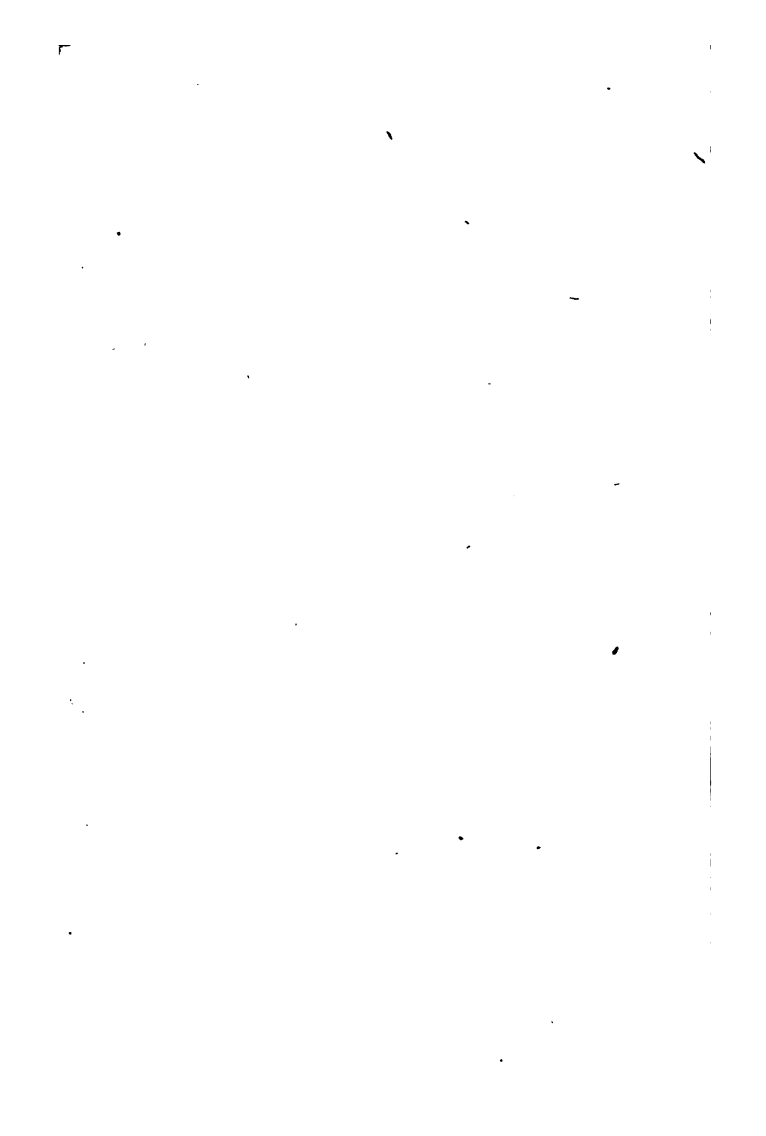
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B. S.



**THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,**  
**Their Authenticity and Inspiration:**

ABBRIDGED FROM

**"THE ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY,"**

BY THE

**RIGHT REV. GEORGE TOMLINE,**  
**SOMETIME BISHOP OF LINCOLN.**



**FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PEOPLE.**

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# THE HOLY SCRIPTURES:

*Their Authenticity and Inspiration.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

CHRISTIAN Theology, or Divinity, teaches from Revelation the knowledge of GOD, His various dispensations to mankind, and the duties required of men by their Creator. The Scriptures, or Bible, are the only authentic source from which instruction upon these important points can be derived. The word Scriptures literally signifies writings, and the word Bible, book ; but these words are now, by way of eminence and distinction, exclusively applied to those sacred compositions which contain the Revealed Will of GOD. The word "Scriptures" occurs in this sense in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles. The word Bible, or Book of books, was used in its present sense by the early Christians. S. Paul calls the dispensation of Moses the Old Testament, and the dispensation of CHRIST the New Testament. The first five books of Moses, called the Pentateuch, were written by their author in one continued work, and still remain in that form, in

the public copies read in the Jewish synagogues. The division probably was first adopted in the Septuagint version, as the titles prefixed are of Greek derivation, and were used by the Jews in their private copies, in the time of Josephus. The Septuagint version is a translation of the Old Testament into Greek,<sup>1</sup> made at Alexandria, (270 B.C.,) when Ptolemy Philadelphus was king of Egypt. Ptolemy applied to Eleazar, the high priest of Jerusalem, for persons to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, and the High Priest sent six elders from each of the twelve tribes. It was called Septuagint, either on account of its approval by the Sanhedrim or Jewish Council, whose number was seventy, or from the number of its translators. It was in great esteem among the Jews in the time of our SAVIOUR, and most of the quotations in the New Testament are made from it, except those in S. Matthew's Gospel.

It appears from Deuteronomy, that the book of the Law, or Pentateuch, was by Moses' command deposited in the tabernacle. It was kept there in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan. To this sanctuary were consigned the other sacred books, written before the building of the temple at Jerusalem. And when Solomon had finished the temple, he directed that these books should be removed into it; and also, that the future compositions of inspired men should be secured in the same holy place. As the burning of the Scriptures, when the temple was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar, is not lamented by any of the Prophets, and as the treasures of the temple

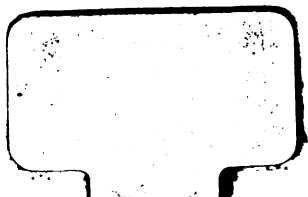
<sup>1</sup> From the original Hebrew. The Old Testament contains the only writings now extant in that language.

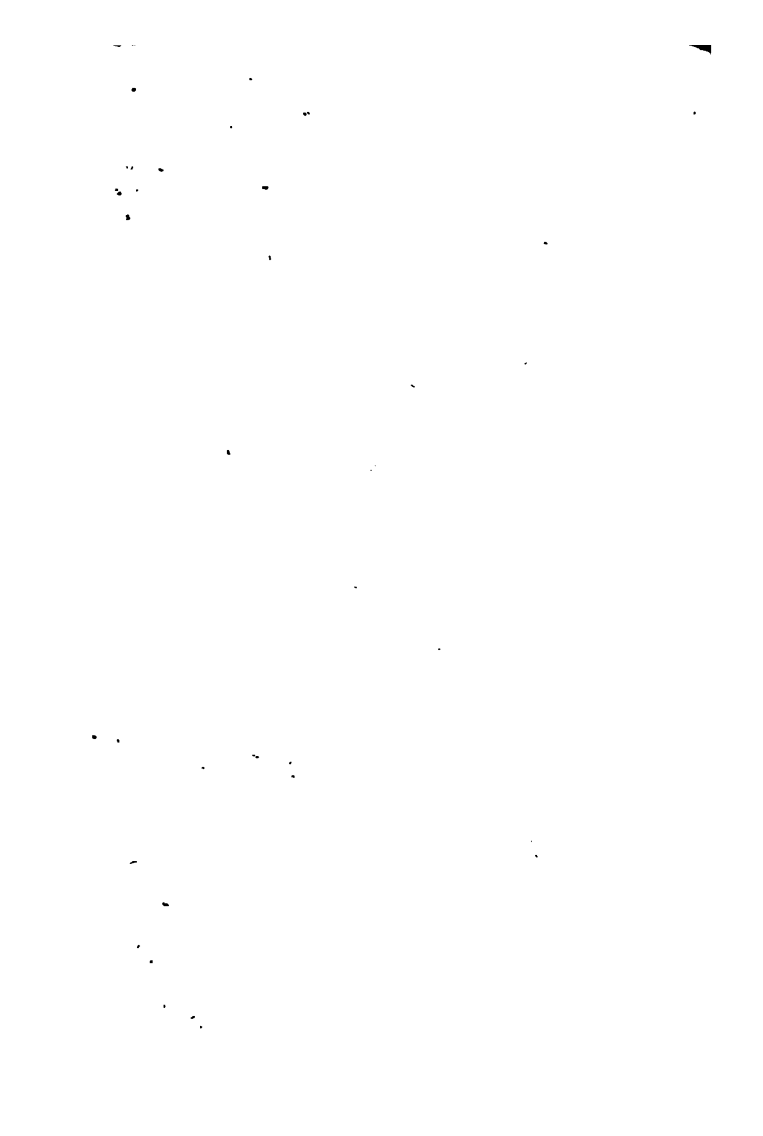
were set apart as sacred by Nebuchadnezzar, it is probable these autographs were saved. If, however, the originals were destroyed, it is certain that there were at that time numerous copies of them. We find Daniel, in captivity, referring to the book of the Law as then existing, and after the captivity, Ezra not only read and explained the Law to the people, but he restored the public worship and sacrifices according to the Mosaic ritual, and therefore he must have been in possession either of the original manuscript, or of a copy so well authenticated as to leave no doubt of its accuracy in the minds of the people. Ezra, in conjunction with the great synagogue (120 elders, who after the return of the Jews into Judea, laboured to restore the Jewish Church) made a collection of the sacred writings, then increased by the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah—and as Ezra was inspired, whatever received his sanction was genuine and authentic. To this collection (placed according to former custom in the temple) were afterwards annexed the sacred compositions of Ezra himself, as well as those of Nehemiah and Malachi, written after the death of Ezra. This addition was probably made by Simon the Just, the last of the Great Synagogue, and completed the Old Testament, for after Malachi no prophet arose till John the Baptist, of whom Malachi foretold that he should precede “the great day of the Lord,” that is the coming of the Messiah.

Whether or no Ezra's copy of the Scriptures was destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes, when he pillaged the temple, is not material, since we know that



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"Blindness has happened to them" only "in part," and the constancy with which they have endured persecution and suffered hardships rather than renounce the commands of their lawgiver, fully proves their firm conviction that these books were divinely inspired, and that they remain uninjured by time and transcription.

The SAVIOUR of the world, even He Who came expressly "from the FATHER of Truth to bear witness to the truth," in His last instructions to His Apostles, just before His Ascension, said, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me." Our LORD, by thus adopting the common division of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, which comprehended all the Hebrew Scriptures, ratified the Old Testament, as it was received by the Jews; and by declaring that these books contained prophecies which must be fulfilled, He established their divine inspiration, since GOD alone can enable men to foretell future events. CHRIST told the Jews they made "the Word of GOD of none effect through their traditions." By thus calling the written rules which the Jews had received for the conduct of their lives, "the Word of GOD," He declared that the Hebrew Scriptures proceeded from GOD Himself.

S. Paul says to Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS." "All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD."



S. Luke says, "God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets."

S. Peter tells us, "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST."

There is scarcely a book in the Old Testament which is not repeatedly quoted in the New, as of divine authority.

When it is said that Scripture is divinely inspired it is not to be understood that God suggested every word, or dictated every expression. The sacred penmen were evidently permitted to write as their several tempers, understandings, and habits of life, directed. They did not always stand in need of supernatural communication; but whenever, and as far as divine assistance was necessary, it was always afforded.

In different parts of Scripture we perceive different sorts of, and degrees of, inspiration: God enabled Moses to give an account of the Creation of the world; He enabled Joshua to record with exactness the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan; He enabled David to mingle prophetic information with the varied effusions of gratitude, contrition, and piety; He enabled Solomon to deliver wise instructions for the regulation of human life; He enabled Isaiah to deliver predictions concerning the future SAVIOUR of mankind; and Ezra to collect the sacred Scriptures into one authentic volume, "but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."

In some cases Inspiration only produced accuracy in relating past occurrences; in others it communi-

cated ideas not only unknown before, but infinitely beyond the reach of unassisted human intellect ; and sometimes inspired prophets delivered predictions for the use of future ages, which they did not themselves comprehend, and which cannot be fully understood till they are accomplished. But whatever distinctions we may make with respect to the degrees of Inspiration we may rest assured that all inspired writing is free from material error ; for we cannot suppose that GOD would suffer any such errors, as might tend to mislead our faith or pervert our practice, to be mixed with those truths which He Himself has mercifully revealed to His creatures as the means of their eternal salvation. In this restricted sense it may be asserted that the sacred writers always wrote under the influence, or guidance, or care of the HOLY SPIRIT, which sufficiently establishes the truth and divine authority of all Scripture.

The historical books appear, from internal evidence, to have been chiefly written by persons contemporary with the periods to which they relate. Some of these books, however, were compiled in after times from the sacred annals mentioned in Scripture as written by prophets or seers, and from those public records, and other authentic documents, which, though written by uninspired men, were held in high estimation, and preserved with great care by persons appointed as keepers of the genealogies and public archives of the Jewish nation. These books may be considered, therefore, a compendious selection of such remarkable occurrences and operations as were best calculated to illustrate the religion of the Hebrew nation ; to set before that perverse and

ungrateful people an abstract of GOD's proceedings, of their interests and duties ; as also to furnish posterity with an instructive picture of the divine attributes, and with a model of that dispensation on which a nobler and more spiritual government was to be erected ; and, moreover, to place before mankind the melancholy proofs of that corruption, which had been entailed upon them, and to exhibit in the depravity of a nation highly favoured, miraculously governed, and instructed by inspired teachers, the necessity of that redemption and renewal of righteousness, which was so early and so repeatedly promised by the prophets. It seems probable therefore that the books of Kings and Chronicles are an abridgment of the works of contemporary prophets, and authentic public writings compiled by Ezra after the captivity, in order to display the sacred history under one point of view ; and hence they contain expressions which result from contemporary description, and others which as clearly argue them to have been composed long after the occurrences which they relate.

In the ancient Hebrew Canon these books were placed in the class of prophetical books ; they are cited as such by the evangelical writers, and it must surely be considered as a strong testimony to the constant opinion of the Jews respecting the Inspiration of these books that they have never dared to annex any historical narrative to them since the death of Malachi. They closed the sacred volume when the succession of prophets ceased.

That all the prophetical parts of the Old Testament proceeded from GOD, is continually affirmed

by the prophets themselves, and is demonstrated by the indubitable testimony which history bears to the accurate fulfilment of many of these predictions; others are gradually receiving their accomplishment in the times in which we live, and afford the surest pledge for the completion of those which remain to be fulfilled. The past, the present, and the future have a connected reference to one great plan, which infinite wisdom, prescience, and power, could alone form, reveal, and execute. Every succeeding age throws an increasing light upon these sacred writings, and contributes additional evidence to their divine origin. It is therefore our duty, as S. Paul thought it his, "to believe all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets."

Not only did the rival kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the hostile sects of Jews and Samaritans, and every denomination of early Christians, receive the Pentateuch as unquestionably written by Moses, but we find it referred to by so many heathen authors, as plainly shows it to have been the undisputed opinion in the Pagan world, that this book was the work of the Jewish legislator; and Porphyry, who lived in the third century after CHRIST, one of the most learned enemies of Christianity, admitted the genuineness of the Pentateuch. Mahomet maintained the Inspiration of Moses, and revered the sanctity of the Jewish laws, and when we consider his avowed enmity and contempt for both Jews and Christians, nothing short of his conviction of the impossibility of lessening the general esteem in which these books were held, in a country which had kept up a constant intercourse with the Israel-

ites from the earliest times, could have drawn from him this concession.

At the end of Deuteronomy, Moses expressly says: "And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your GOD, that it may be there for a witness against thee." In many parts of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch is repeatedly referred to as "the Law" and "the Book of Moses;" and we are told "Joshua read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before the congregation of Israel." From which it is evident, that the book of the Law or Pentateuch, existed in the time of Joshua, the successor of Moses.

In the New Testament, "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." In the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, every one of the five books is quoted as written by Moses; and as a sufficient proof of the inspiration of the Pentateuch, CHRIST called the words of Exodus and Deuteronomy, the words of GOD Himself: "GOD commanded, saying, Honour thy father and thy mother; and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death," (S. Matth. xv. 4.) In the parallel

passage of S. Mark, vii. 10, these precepts are called the words of Moses. And upon another occasion, CHRIST confirmed the divine authority of every part of the Pentateuch: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

The most ancient histories remarkably coincide with the Pentateuch. The departure of a shepherd people out of Egypt, not originally Egyptians, who, after being compelled to work for some time in the quarries, left it under the direction of Osarsiph or Moyses, (which latter word signifies, in the Egyptian language, a person preserved out of the water,) and were pursued over the sandy desert as far as the bounds of Syria, was particularly mentioned by Manetho, (who lived about 260 years B. C.,) and many others. He wrote his history from the ancient Egyptian records. The name and history of Abraham were celebrated by many eastern writers. In the decree issued by the magistrates of Pergamus, 44 years B. C., is the following: "Our ancestors were friendly to the Jews, even in the days of Abraham, who was the father of all the Hebrews, as we have also found it set down in our public records."

Berosus, who flourished about 270 B. C., gives an account of the ten generations between the Creation and the Flood, the preservation of Noah in the Ark, and the catalogue of his posterity, which accords with the Mosaic history.

The earliest records of the Armenian nation mention the Tower of Babel.

Josephus appeals to the public records of different nations, and to a great number of books extant in his time, but now lost, as indisputable evidence in the opinion of the heathen world, for the truth of the most remarkable events related in his history, the earlier periods of which he professes to have taken from the Pentateuch.

The following traditions, according with the Mosaic history, prevalent among the ancients, and now existing in various parts of the world, are singularly striking :

That the world was formed from rude and shapeless matter by the Spirit of God :

That the seventh day was a holy day :

That man was created perfect, and had dominion given him over all inferior animals :

That there had been a golden age, when man, in a state of innocence, had open intercourse with Heaven :

That when his nature became corrupt, the earth itself underwent a change :

That sacrifice was necessary to appease the offended gods :

That there was an evil spirit continually endeavouring to injure man, and thwart the designs of the Good Spirit : but that he should at last be finally subdued, and universal happiness restored, through the intercession of a Mediator :

That the life of man, during the first ages of the world, was of great length ; that there were ten generations previous to the General Deluge :

That only eight persons were saved out of the Flood in an Ark, by the interposition of the Deity :

these, and many others, are related to have been prevalent in the ancient world by Egyptian, Phœnician, Greek, and Roman authors.

This argument has lately received additional strength from the discovery of an almost universal corresponding tradition, traced up among the nations, whose records have been the best preserved, to times even prior to the age of Moses.

These are evidently fragments of one original truth, broken by the dispersion of the patriarchal families, and corrupted by length of time, allegory, and idolatry.

The names assigned by Moses to eastern countries and cities, derived to them from the patriarchs, their original founders, are for the most part the very names by which they were anciently known all over the east. Moses has traced in the tenth chapter of Genesis, all the inhabitants of the earth, from the Caspian and Persian seas, to the extreme Gades, to their original, and recorded at once the period and occasion of their dispersion.

But a particular consideration of the contents of the Pentateuch, as relating immediately to the Jews, will furnish irrefragable arguments to prove its authenticity, and the truth of its claims to inspiration.

The Pentateuch contains directions for the establishment of the civil and religious polity of the Jews, which, it is acknowledged, existed from the time of Moses; it contains a code of laws, which every individual of the nation was required to observe with the utmost punctuality, and with which, therefore, every individual must be supposed to have been acquainted; it contains the history of



the ancestors of the Jews in regular succession, from the creation of the world ; and a series of prophecies, which, in an especial manner, concerned themselves, and which must have been beyond measure interesting to a people who were alternately enjoying promised blessings, and suffering under predicted calamities ; it contains not only the wonders of Creation and Providence in a general view, but also repeated instances of the superintending care of the GOD of the whole earth over their particular nation, and the institution of feasts and ceremonies in perpetual remembrance of these divine interpositions ; and all these things are professedly addressed in the name, and to the contemporaries of Moses ; and to those who had seen the miracles he records, who had been witnesses to the events he relates, and who had heard the awful promulgation of the law.

Let any one reflect upon these extraordinary and wonderful facts, and surely he must be convinced that they could never have obtained the universal belief of those, among whose ancestors they are said to have happened, unless there had been the clearest evidence of their certainty and truth. Nor were these facts the transient occurrences of a single hour or day, and witnessed only by a small number of persons ; on the contrary, some of them were continued through a space of forty years, and were known and felt by several millions of people : the pillar of the cloud was seen by day, and the pillar of fire by night, during their whole journey in the wilderness ; nor did the manna fail till they had eaten of the corn in the land of Canaan. We see Moses as leader, lawgiver, and historian, not once

or twice, or as it were cautiously and surreptitiously, but avowedly and continually, appealing to the conviction of a whole people, who were witnesses of these manifestations of divine power, for the justice of their punishments, and resting the authority of the law upon the truth of the wonderful history he records.

And further, in order to preserve the accurate recollection of these events, and prevent the possibility of any alteration in this history, he expressly commanded that the whole Pentateuch should be read at the end of every seven years in the solemnity of the year of release, at the feast of tabernacles, in the hearing of all Israel, that all the people, men, women, and children, and the strangers within their gates, might hear, and learn to fear the LORD their God, and observe to do all the words of the law ; and especially that their children, who had not been eye-witnesses of the miracles which established its claim to their faith and obedience, might hear the marvellous history which they were taught by their fathers, publicly declared and confirmed ; and learn to fear and obey the LORD their God from the wonders of Creation and Providence revealed to His servant Moses, and from the supernatural powers with which he was invested. We have the authority of tradition to say, that every tribe was furnished with a copy of the law before the death of Moses ; and indeed in almost every page of Scripture, the necessity of distributing numerous copies is implied, by the repeated injunctions for public and private instruction.

Can we require a more striking proof of the ex-

istence and designed publicity of the law, than the command to "write all the words of the law very plainly on pillars of stone, and to set them up on the day they passed over Jordan, (the day they took possession of the promised land,) and to plaster them over to preserve them?"

How could they "teach the law diligently to their children, and explain to them the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, and the history of their forefathers; talk of them when sitting in the house, when walking in the way, when they lay down, and when they rose up; bind the words for a sign upon their door-posts and gates, and upon their hands, and as frontlets between their eyes," unless the law had been written, and they had access to copies of it? Scribes of the law are mentioned very early; and must not the cities of the priests, who were commanded to teach the people, and the schools of the prophets, have been supplied with copies? Surely the office of the Levite whom every family was "to keep within their gates," must have been to teach the law. The command that every King, upon his accession to the throne, should "write him a copy of the law in a book, out of that which is before the priests," is a proof that there was a copy of the law under the peculiar care of the priests, that is, deposited in the tabernacle, or temple.

S. Luke informs us, that "Moses in old time had in every city them that preached him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day."

The Jews were exceedingly prone to transgress the law of Moses, and to fall into idolatry; but the ringleaders of their revolts never made use of the

plea of there being the least suspicion of any falsity or imposture in the writings of Moses. The Jews, who were a strangely incredulous people, never found ground to question these, but would sooner part with their lives and fortunes, than admit any variation or alteration as to their law.

The first submission to such a law as that of Moses, must have been while all the tremendous circumstances of its promulgation were fresh upon their minds ; for how could a people whose characteristic was stubbornness, have been brought to submit to such a law, unless they had been habituated to it previous to their settlement in the land of Canaan ? or how would a nation, whose subsistence was derived from agriculture and pasturage, have submitted to laws apparently so contrary to their interest, as those relating to the Sabbatical and jubilee years, unless they had been convinced that miraculous plenty and security would be the certain consequence of obedience.

Moses not only required obedience to his laws, but he ordered : "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it."

The truth of every part of the narrative contained in the Book of Genesis, is positively confirmed by the constant testimony of a people who preserved a certain unmixed genealogy from father to son, through a long succession of ages ; and by these people we are assured that their ancestors ever did believe that this account had the authority of uninterrupted tradition from their first parent Adam, till it was written by the inspired pen of Moses.

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The great length to which human life was extended in the patriarchal ages, rendered it very practicable for the Jews in the time of Moses, to trace their lineal descent as far as the Flood, nay, even to Adam; for Adam conversed fifty-six years with Lamech, Noah's father, Lamech being born A.M. 874, and Adam having died A.M. 930; and Methuselah, Noah's grandfather, who was born A.M. 687, did not die till A.M. 1656, so that he was two hundred and forty-three years contemporary with Adam, and six hundred with Noah. Shem, the son of Noah, was probably living in some part of Jacob's time, or Isaac's at least; and Moses was great grandson of Levi, one of the sons of Jacob.

Setting aside, therefore, inspiration for a moment, can we believe that the grandchildren of Jacob could be ignorant of their own pedigree, and of the time when they came into Egypt? Can we think that the selling and advancement of Joseph could be forgotten in so short a time?

Could Jacob be ignorant whence his grandfather Abraham came, especially as he lived so long in the country himself, and married into that branch of the family which was remaining there?

Could Abraham be ignorant of the Flood, when he was contemporary with, and descended from Shem, one of the eight persons who escaped in the Ark?

Could Shem be ignorant of what passed before the Flood, when Adam, the first man, lived so near the time of Noah?

And could Noah be ignorant of the Creation and Fall of man, when he was contemporary with those who conversed with Adam?

Can we then believe that Moses would adopt the style of allegory in the beginning of a book written for the use of a plain unlettered people; that he would introduce a grave history of real occurrences, a detailed practical system of jurisprudence and of religion, by a fictitious representation of the wonders of Creation and Providence?

In the explanation of Scripture no interpretation which tends to supersede the literal sense should be admitted. The practice of allegorizing Scripture has been attended with the worst consequences. Though the Bible abounds with figurative language, and the sacred writers continually use metaphors to illustrate their meaning, we may venture to pronounce, that in no one book of the Old or New Testament, which professes to relate past occurrences, is there a single instance of allegory. This observation, which is meant to be confined to the historical parts of Scripture, is perfectly consistent with the typical nature of many circumstances of the Jewish history. It is only maintained that the narratives of past events are universally to be taken in their plain and literal sense. Our own ideas of probability are not to be the criterion by which we are to decide upon the reality of transactions recorded in the Bible; nor are we to question the truth of Scripture history because we cannot always reconcile GOD's dealings with mankind to our notions of justice and mercy. Our partial and imperfect knowledge of the great plans of Divine Providence should teach us to judge of the counsels of the Almighty with humility and diffidence. The short-sighted reason of man is but ill-qualified to

pass sentence upon the decrees of Infinite Wisdom ; and the consciousness of this incompetence will be the best preservative against the bad effects of that arrogant and irreverent presumption with which the Word of GOD is treated in the present age.

The command to destroy the nations of Canaan is often considered as being absolutely irreconcilable with divine justice. It is curious that the destruction of the inhabitants of a small part of the earth is pronounced to be incompatible with the divine attributes, while the destruction of the whole world by the Deluge is passed by without comment. But the Deluge is a fact authenticated by such variety of proofs, and so universally acknowledged in all ages and countries, that its consistency with the justice of GOD must be allowed, or His moral government must be denied. And yet, in reality, the general destruction of the human race by the Deluge, and the partial extermination of the inhabitants of Canaan by the Israelites are to be accounted for on the same principle. In both cases the enormous wickedness of the people drew upon them signal punishment. "GOD looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt ; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon earth. And GOD said to Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them ; and behold I will destroy them from the earth." And Moses expressly declared to the Israelites, when they were about to take possession of Canaan : "Speak not thou in thy heart, after that the LORD thy GOD hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought

me in to possess this land ; but for the wickedness of these nations, the LORD doth drive them out from before thee : not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go to possess their land ; but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy GOD doth drive them out from before thee." When GOD first promised the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed, He expressly declared that they were not to take possession of it till the fourth generation after they should remove into Egypt ; " because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." It therefore appears that the comparative righteousness of one nation postponed the fate of several others above four hundred years ; and that it was not till the measure of wickedness was completed, that they were destroyed by the outstretched arm of the Almighty, Who led on His chosen people, and commanded them to execute His judgments upon these incorrigibly wicked nations, which were designed at the same time to be a warning to themselves. " Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy GOD, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day. It shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy GOD, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them ; I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish ; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your GOD." Thus this command, so far from being repugnant to the attributes of GOD, affords an example of His mercy and forbearance.



It is believed that Joshua, Samuel, or one of the succeeding prophets, wrote the account of the death of Moses, contained in the last chapter of Deuteronomy; and that Ezra, when he transcribed the history written by Moses, changed the names of some places, which were then become obsolete, to those by which they were called in his time, and added for the purposes of explanation the few passages which are allowed to be not suitable to the age of Moses; Ezra being himself an inspired writer raised up by GOD to re-establish the Jewish Church.

The *old Vulgate*, of which the copies are now lost, was an ancient version of the Bible into Latin.

The Old Testament of this version was translated from the Septuagint. It was in general use till the time of Jerome, and was also called the *Italic version*.

The *present Vulgate* is the ancient *Italic version*, revised and improved by the corrections of Jerome, in the fourth century, and others. This is the only translation of the Bible allowed by the Church of Rome, and it is used by that Church on all occasions, except that in the Missal and Psalms a few passages of the ancient Vulgate are retained, as are the apocryphal books which Jerome did not translate.

There are two principal editions of the present Vulgate, one published by Pope Sixtus V., the other by Clement VIII., which differ considerably from each other, though both are declared authentic from the papal chair.

Some of the ancient *Italic version* has been recovered from citations in the writings of the Fathers.

## CONTENTS OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE Book of GENESIS, (which derives its name from a Greek word signifying generation or production,) comprehends a period of about 2369 years. It contains the history of the Creation of the world in six days, the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and their punishment, the increase of mankind, the progress of wickedness, the general destruction of the human race by the Deluge except Noah and his family, who were miraculously preserved in the Ark; the promise of GOD that the world should no more be destroyed by a flood; the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion of Noah's descendants; the call of Abraham, and the covenant of GOD with him, the repetition of that covenant with Isaac and Jacob, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the history of Joseph, and the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt.

The Book of EXODUS (signifying departure) is so named because it relates to the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt. It comprehends the history of about 145 years, the principal events contained in it being the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, their miraculous deliverance by the hand of Moses, their entrance into the wilderness of Sinai, the promulgation of the Law, and the building of the tabernacle.

The Book of **LEVITICUS** describes the office and duties of the Levites and priests, all of whom were descended from Levi. It contains a minute account of the religious rites and ceremonies to be observed by the Jews, and records the transactions of only one month.

The Book of **NUMBERS** contains an account of the numbering of the people of Israel, both in the beginning of the second year after their departure out of Egypt, and at the conclusion of their journey in the wilderness. It comprehends a period of about thirty-eight years, but most of the events related in it happened in the first and last of those years. The principal contents, besides the numbering of the people, are the consecration of the tabernacle, the encampments of the Israelites, with the circumstances attending their wanderings in the wilderness; a repetition of several of the principal laws, before given to the Israelites, with an addition of some new civil and religious precepts, an enumeration of the twelve tribes, and directions for the future division of the land of Canaan.

The Book of **DEUTERONOMY** (signifying second law) contains a repetition of the civil and moral law, which was a second time delivered by Moses, with additions and explanations, as well to impress it more forcibly upon the Israelites, as for the benefit of those who, being born in the wilderness, were not present at the first promulgation of the Law. It contains also a recapitulation of the events which had befallen the Israelites since their departure from Egypt, with severe reproaches for past misconduct, and earnest exhortations to future obedience. The

Messiah is explicitly foretold, and there are many predictions, particularly in chapters xxviii., xxx., xxxii., and xxxiii., relative to the future condition of the Jews. This book includes the period of about two months, and finishes with the death of Moses, believed to have been added by his successor Joshua.

These five books were written by Moses, and are supposed to contain the history of 2552½ years.

The Book of JOSHUA comprehends the history of about thirty years. It contains an account of the conquest and division of the land of Canaan, the renewal of the covenant with the Israelites, and the death of Joshua. In the last chapter it is said that "Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God," which seems to imply that he subjoined this history to that of Moses. The five last verses, giving an account of the death of Joshua, were added by one of his successors, probably by Eleazar, Phinehas, or Samuel.

The Book of JUDGES treats principally of those illustrious persons, who under the name of Judges, governed Israel in the intermediate time between Joshua and the establishment of regal government. It is believed to have been written by Samuel, the last of the Judges. That it was written before the reign of David, is proved by the following, "The Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day," for it is certain that the Jebusites were driven out of that city early in the reign of David. The beginning of the Book of Judges gives an account of the farther conquests of the Israelites in

the land of Canaan, of their disobedience to the commands of GOD, and of their consequent subjection to the king of Mesopotamia ; it then states the appointment of Othniel, the first judge of Israel, and continues the history to the death of Samson. In the seventeenth, and remaining chapters, are recorded remarkable occurrences which were omitted in their proper places, that they might not interrupt the general history. This book includes a period of about 309 years.

The Book of RUTH is so called from the name of a native of Moab, whose history it contains. It may be considered a supplement to the Book of Judges, being joined to it in the Hebrew canon, and being a story belonging to the same period. Ruth's son Obed was the grandfather of David, and the genealogy of David, from Pharez the son of Judah, from whom the Messiah was to spring, is here given ; and some have thought that the descent of our SAVIOUR from Ruth, a Gentile woman, was an intimation of the comprehensive nature of the Christian dispensation. As David was Ruth's great-grandson we may place her history about 1250 B.C. This book was certainly written after the birth of David, and probably by the prophet Samuel, though some attribute it to Hezekiah, and others to Ezra.

The latter part of Judges, and the whole of Ruth, may be considered as digressions.

The First Book of SAMUEL takes up the thread of the sacred history, and completes the government of the Judges, of whom Eli and Samuel were the last. It relates the choice and rejection of Saul, the first king of the Israelites, the anointing of

David in his stead, the early part of David's life, and the reign and death of Saul. The first verse of the twenty-fifth chapter mentions the death of Samuel. In the first Book of Chronicles is found the following, "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the Seer, and in the book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the book of Gad the Seer," whence it appears that there were formerly three books written respectively by Samuel, Gad, and Nathan, which together comprehended the whole history of David; and it is supposed that these books were placed as one in the Hebrew canon, and called the Book of Samuel, from the most distinguished of its authors. In our canon this Book is divided into two.

The Second Book of SAMUEL continues the history of David after Saul's death, through a space of forty years. It was probably written by Gad and Nathan.

The First Book of KINGS commences with David's death, and contains a period of 126 years, to the death of Jehoshaphat; and

The Second Book of KINGS continues the history of the Kings of Israel and Judah through a space of three hundred years, to the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. These two books formed only one in the Hebrew canon, and were probably compiled by Ezra from the records which were regularly kept in Jerusalem and Samaria, of all public transactions. These records seem to have been made by contemporary prophets.

The Two Books of CHRONICLES formed one in the Hebrew Canon. In the Septuagint version they

were called the books "of things omitted;" and were first named the Chronicles by Jerome.<sup>1</sup> They were probably compiled by Ezra, from the ancient records of the kings of Judah and Israel. The first part contains genealogical tables, and gives a circumstantial account of the twelve tribes, which must have been very valuable to the Jews after their return from captivity, and necessary to the preservation of their civil rights and their religious polity, as well as to prove the fulfilment of the promise respecting the Messiah. In the tenth chapter is recorded the death of Saul. From the eleventh chapter to the end, we have a history of David's reign, a statement of his preparations for building the temple, his regulations respecting the Priests and Levites, and his appointment of musicians for the public service of religion.

The Second Book of CHRONICLES contains a brief sketch of the Jewish history from Solomon's accession, to the return from the Babylonian captivity, a period of four hundred and eighty years.

EZRA, the author of the book which bears his name, was of the sacerdotal family, a direct descendant from Aaron, and succeeded Zerubbabel in the government of Judea. This book begins with the repetition of the last two verses of the second book of Chronicles, and carries the Jewish history through a period of seventy-nine years, commencing from the edict of Cyrus. It contains an account of the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel, after the seventy years' captivity, of their re-establishment in

<sup>1</sup> Jerome lived A.D. 331—420.

Judea, and of the building and dedication of the temple. In the last four chapters, Ezra relates his appointment to the government of Judea by Artaxerxes Longimanus, his journey thither from Babylon, the disobedience of the Jews, and the reform which he effected among them. Between the dedication of the temple and Ezra's departure, viz. between the 6th and 7th chapters, there was an interval of about fifty-eight years, during which nothing is here related concerning the Jews, save that, contrary to GOD's command, they intermarried with Gentiles. This book is written in Chaldee from the eighth verse of the fourth chapter, to the twenty-seventh verse of the seventh chapter : probably, because it contains chiefly letters and decrees written in that language, the original of which he might think right to record ; and indeed the people recently returned from Babylon, were as familiar with Chaldee, as with the Hebrew tongue.

NEHEMIAH was of the tribe of Judah, and was probably born at Babylon during the captivity. He was not the Nehemiah who returned from the captivity with Zerubbabel. He was so distinguished for his family and attainments, as to be selected for the office of cup-bearer to the king of Persia, a post of honour and emolument. He was made governor of Judea, on his own application, by Artaxerxes Longimanus ; and this book, which in the Hebrew canon was joined to that of Ezra, gives an account of his appointment and administration during about thirty-six years, to A.M. 3595, at which time the Scripture history closes, consequently, these historical books from Joshua to Nehemiah inclusive,



contain the history of the Jews from the death of Moses, A.M. 2553, to the Reformation established by Nehemiah, after the return from captivity, a period of 1042 years.

The Book of **ESTHER** contains the history of a Jewish captive, who, by her remarkable accomplishments, gained the affection of King Ahasuerus, and by marriage with him, was raised to the throne of Persia; and it relates the origin and ceremonies of the feast of Purim, instituted in commemoration of the great deliverance which she, by her interest, procured for the Jews, whose destruction had been planned by the offended pride of Haman. It is not known whether Ezra, Mordecai, Joachim, or the great synagogue, were the authors of this book. Ahasuerus is shown to be the same person as Artaxerxes Longimanus. Ahasuerus is always translated Artaxerxes in the Septuagint version. This places the commencement of the history about A.M. 3544, and it continues during about twenty years.

The Book of **JOB** contains the history of a man equally distinguished for purity and uprightness, and for honours, wealth, and domestic felicity, whom God permitted, for the trial of his faith, to be suddenly deprived of all his numerous blessings, and plunged into the most accumulated distress. It gives an account of his eminent piety, patience, and resignation, and of his subsequent elevation to a still greater degree of prosperity and happiness. After God blessed Job a second time, he lived one hundred and forty years. That Job was a real person is shown by Ezekiel, xiv. 14. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should

astes, and the Song of Solomon, are all that remain of him who is related to "have spoken three thousand proverbs, whose songs were a thousand and five, and who spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; who spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes." The Book of Proverbs is divided into five parts; the first nine chapters containing by way of preface, general exhortations from a teacher to his pupil. The second part, from the beginning of the tenth chapter, to the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second chapter, contains what may properly be called Proverbs, short, unconnected sentences, adapted to the instruction of youth. In the third part, from the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second chapter, to the end of the twenty-fourth chapter, the pupil is addressed as being present. The fourth part, from the beginning of the twenty-fifth to the end of the twenty-ninth chapter, consists of "Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out." These were probably the prophets whom he employed to restore the service and writings of the church, as Eliakim, Joah, Shebna, and probably Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, who all flourished in Hezekiah's reign. The fifth part contains the thirtieth and thirty-first chapters. The former relates "the words of Agur, the son of Jakeh;" and the latter "the words of King Lemuel, that his mother taught him;" but we are not informed when or where Agur or Lemuel lived, and many of the ancient fathers considered these chapters also as the work of Solomon.

The Book of ECCLESIASTES is called "The words

of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem," that is, of Solomon, who, from the great excellency of his instructions, was emphatically styled the Preacher. The author describes his wisdom, riches, writings, and works, in a manner applicable only to Solomon; and to this internal evidence we may add the concurrent testimony both of Christian and Jewish tradition. It seems to be confined to a single subject, namely, an inquiry into the chief good. By a comprehensive consideration of the circumstances of human life, Solomon points out the vanity of all secular pursuits, in a manner not to excite a peevish disgust at this world, but to induce us to prepare for that state in which there will be no "vanity or vexation of the spirit."

THE SONG OF SOLOMON is believed to be the epithalamium or marriage song, composed by that monarch upon his marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh; but it is also considered as a mystical allegory, typifying the intimate connection between CHRIST and His Church. It may be called a dramatic poem of the pastoral kind.

It is universally acknowledged that the remaining sixteen prophetic books of the Old Testament, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, were written by the persons whose names they bear.

ISAIAH was of the tribe of Judah, and supposed to be descended from a branch of the royal family. He was the earliest of the four great prophets, and entered upon his prophetic office in the last year of Uzziah's reign about 758 B.C. He appears to have been put to death by command of Manasseh, in the first year of his reign, and in that case he prophe-

sied about forty-five years. Isaiah is uniformly spoken of in Scripture as a prophet of the highest dignity ; and he gives so circumstantial an account of the promised Messiah and His kingdom, that he is called the Evangelical Prophet. This book, however, contains many other predictions, and several historical relations. It may be considered under six divisions : the first consists of the first five chapters, and contains a description of the condition of the Jews in the several periods of their history ; the promulgation and success of the Gospel, and the coming of CHRIST to judgment. The second division consists of the next seven chapters, and contains the promise to Abaz, predictive of CHRIST, whose nature, birth, and kingdom, are described in the ninth chapter ; the denunciations of punishment upon the Assyrians in the tenth chapter, seem an interruption to this glorious subject, which is resumed in the eleventh, where the prophet breaks out into a hymn of praise, celebrating the future triumph of the Church. The third division, from the thirteenth to the twenty-seventh chapter inclusive, begins with a remarkable prophecy of the destruction of Babylon, considered as a type of Antichrist ; it then describes the fate of the Jews, Assyrians, Moabites, Philistines, Arabians, Syrians, and Egyptians ; and concludes in a manner similar to the last. The fourth division, from the twenty-eighth to the thirty-fifth inclusive, contains predictions relative to the then approaching invasion of Sennacherib ; but it is interspersed with severe reproofs and threats against the Jews for disobedience and wilful blindness, and with consolatory

promises to those who should remain faithful to the service of GOD, alluding frequently to the times of the Gospel. The thirty-sixth and two following chapters, constitute the fifth division, and give account of Sennacherib's invasion, and of the prolongation of Hezekiah's life.

The sixth division reaches from the thirty-ninth chapter to the end of the book : here the prophet generally addresses his countrymen as being then in the captivity which he had previously foretold ; he predicts the destruction of the empire of Babylon, and the restoration of the Jews to their own land, by their deliverer Cyrus, whom he represents the Almighty as calling upon by name to execute His will, above one hundred years before his birth. In this latter division are principally contained the prophecies concerning the birth, ministry, death, and religion of CHRIST, with many circumstances which were to precede and follow His incarnation. With these are mixed earnest exhortations to faith and obedience, and positive denunciations of GOD's wrath against the impenitently wicked ; the most comfortable assurances of the constant Providence of GOD, the fulfilment of all His gracious promises, and descriptions of the glorious state of the Church, when it shall be enlarged by the conversion of the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles.

JEREMIAH was of the sacerdotal family and a native of Anathoth, a village about three miles from Jerusalem. He was called to the prophetic office in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, B.C. 628, and continued to exercise it above forty-one years. He was suffered to remain in Judea when his country-

men were carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar ; and he afterwards retired into Egypt with Johanan, the son of Kareah : Jerome states that he was stoned at Talpeshah, a royal city of Egypt, about 586 B.C. Though his prophecies are not supposed to be all arranged in the order in which they were delivered, he not unfrequently appeals to prophecies contained in the former chapters, which had been since fulfilled. The most remarkable predictions are, the Babylonian captivity, with the precise time of its duration, and the return of the Jews—the fate of Zedekiah—the destruction of Babylon accurately described in terms which are usually considered as likewise applicable to the mystical Babylon or Antichrist ; the downfall of many other nations ; the miraculous conception of CHRIST ; the efficiency of His atonement ; the spiritual nature of His religion, and the general conversion and restoration of GOD'S ancient people. Jeremiah also bewails in most pathetic terms, the obstinate wickedness of the Jews, and describes, in plain and impressive language, the calamities which impended over them. He sometimes breaks out into the most bitter complaints of the treatment which he received from his countrymen, whose resentment he provoked by the severity of his reproof. The fifty-first chapter thus concludes : “ Thus far are the words of Jeremiah ; ” it is supposed, therefore, that the last chapter was compiled by Ezra, from the latter part of the second book of Kings, and from the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters of this book, as an introduction to—

The LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH. These were

formerly annexed to his prophecies, but now form a separate book. They are believed to be applicable to some period subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Yet while Jeremiah mourns the desolation of Judah and Jerusalem during the Babylonian captivity, he prophetically paints the still greater miseries they were to suffer at some future time, when the punishment of their iniquity should be accomplished, and they should no more be carried into captivity. This book is divided into five chapters; in the first, second, and fourth, the Prophet speaks in his own person, or introduces Jerusalem as lamenting her calamities, and confessing her sins; in the third chapter, a single Jew, speaking in the name of a chorus of his countrymen, describes the punishment inflicted upon him by GOD, but still acknowledges His mercy, and expresses hopes of deliverance; and in the fifth chapter, the whole nation of the Jews pour forth their united complaints and supplications to Almighty GOD.

EZEKIEL, like his contemporary, Jeremiah, was of the sacerdotal race. He was carried captive to Babylon with Jehoiachim, king of Judah, 598 B.C., and was placed, with others of his countrymen, upon the river Chebar, in Mesopotamia, where he was favoured with the divine revelations contained in this book. He began to prophesy in the fifth year of his captivity, and is supposed to have prophesied about twenty-one years. The boldness with which he censured the idolatry and wickedness of his countrymen is said to have cost him his life; but his memory was greatly revered by the Medes and Persians as well as the Jews. This book may

be considered under five divisions: the first three chapters contain the glorious appearance of GOD to the Prophet, his solemn appointment to his office, with instructions and encouragements for the discharge of it. From the fourth to the twenty-fourth chapter inclusive, he describes, under a variety of visions and similitudes, the calamities impending over Judea, and the total destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, occasionally predicting another period of yet greater desolation, and more general dispersion. From the twenty-fifth to the thirty-second chapter, inclusive, the Prophet foretells the conquest and ruin of many nations and cities which had insulted the Jews in their affliction,—of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines, of Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt, all of which were to be punished by the same mighty instrument of GOD's wrath against the wickedness of man; he also prophesies the condition of these countries in remote periods of the world. From the thirty-second to the fortieth chapter he inveighs against the accumulated sins of the Jews, and the murmuring spirit of his captive brethren; exhorts them earnestly to repent of their hypocrisy and wickedness, upon the assurance that GOD will accept sincere repentance, and comforts them with promises of approaching deliverance under Cyrus, subjoining clear intimations of some far more glorious but distant redemption under the Messiah. The last nine chapters contain a vision of the structure of a new temple and a new polity, applicable to the return from the Babylonian captivity, but in its ultimate sense referring to the glory and prosperity of the universal Church of



**CHRIST.** Jerome observes, that Ezekiel's visions are among the things in Scripture hard to be understood. This arises from the nature and design of his prophecies in great measure. They were delivered amidst the gloom of captivity, and though calculated to cheer the drooping spirits of the Jews, and to keep alive a watchful and submissive confidence in God's mercy, yet they were intended to communicate only such a degree of encouragement as was consistent with a state of punishment, and to excite an indistinct expectation of future blessings, upon the condition of repentance and amendment. The last twelve chapters bear a striking resemblance to the concluding ones of the Revelation.

**DANIEL** was a descendant of the kings of Judah, and is said to have been born at Upper Beth-horon, in the territory of Ephraim. He was carried captive to Babylon when he was about eighteen or twenty years of age, in the year 606 B.C. He was placed in Nebuchadnezzar's court, and afterwards raised to situations of rank and power, both in Babylon and Persia. He lived to the end of the captivity, but being then nearly ninety years old it is most probable that he did not return to Judea. It is believed that he died at Susa, soon after his last vision, in the third year of Cyrus' reign. In the first six chapters are recorded events which occurred in the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius, the second chapter containing Nebuchadnezzar's prophetic dream concerning the four great successive monarchies, and the everlasting kingdom of the Messiah. In the last six chapters are a series of prophecies extending from Daniel's

days to the resurrection. The Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires are all described under appropriate characters, and it is expressly declared that the last was to be divided into ten lesser kingdoms; the time at which CHRIST was to appear is precisely fixed; the rise and fall of Antichrist, and the duration of his power are exactly determined; and the future restoration of the Jews, the victory of CHRIST over all His enemies, and the universal prevalence of true religion, are distinctly foretold, as being to precede the consummation of that stupendous plan of GOD which "was laid before the foundation of the world," and reaches to its dissolution. Part of this book is written in Chaldee, viz., from the fourth verse of the second chapter to the end of the seventh chapter. These chapters relate chiefly to the affairs of Babylon, and it is probable that some passages were taken from the public registers.

HOSEA is considered as a native of Jezreel, and is supposed to have begun to prophesy about 800 years B.C. He exercised his office sixty years. He reproves the Israelites for their idolatry and wickedness, and exhorts to repentance with the greatest earnestness, as the only means of averting the evils impending over their country. The principal predictions are the captivity and dispersion of Israel, deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib, the present state of the Jews, their future restoration and union with the Gentiles in the kingdom of the Messiah, the call of our SAVIOUR out of Egypt, and His resurrection on the third day. These prophecies are in one continued series, without any distinction as

to the times when they were delivered, or the different subjects to which they relate.

JOEL is supposed to have been contemporary with Hosea, but no particulars of his life or death are certainly known. His prophecies are confined to the kingdom of Judah. He inveighs against the sins and impieties of the people, and threatens them with divine vengeance; he exhorts to repentance, fasting, and prayer, and promises the favour of GOD to the obedient. The principal predictions are the Chaldean invasion, under the figure of locusts, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the blessings of the Gospel dispensation, the conversion and restoration of the Jews to their own land, the overthrow of the enemies of GOD, and the glorious state of the Christian Church in the end of the world.

AMOS was contemporary with Hosea, and was by profession a herdsman. He is said to have been put to death by Uzziah, son of Amaziah, whose displeasure he incurred by freely censuring his vices. His prophecies relate chiefly to the kingdom of Israel; but he sometimes denounces judgment against the kingdom of Judah, and also against the people who bordered upon Palestine, the Syrians, Philistines, Tyrians, Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites. He foretells in clear terms the calamities and captivity of the ten tribes, and at the same time declares that GOD will not utterly destroy His chosen people, but that He will, at some future period, restore them to more than their ancient splendour and happiness in the kingdom of the Messiah. His comparisons are chiefly drawn from

lions, and other animals, because he lived among them.

OBADIAH is believed to have been contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and to have prophesied about 585 B.C., soon after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. This book, consisting of a single chapter, predicts the utter destruction of the Edomites, and the future restoration and prosperity of the Jews.

JONAH was the son of Amittai, of the tribe of Zebulun, and was born at Gath-hepher in Galilee. He is considered to be the most ancient of the prophets, and to have lived about 840 years B.C. The book of Jonah is chiefly narrative; he relates that he was commanded by GOD to go to Nineveh and preach against the inhabitants of that capital of the Assyrian empire, that through fear of executing this commission he set sail for Tarshish, and that in his voyage thither, a tempest arising, he was cast by the mariners into the sea, and swallowed by a large fish, that while in the belly of this fish he prayed to GOD, and was, after three days and three nights, delivered out of it alive; that he then received a second command to go and preach against Nineveh, which he obeyed, that upon his threatening the destruction of the city within forty days, the king and people proclaimed a fast and repented of their sins, and that upon this repentance GOD suspended the sentence which He had ordered to be pronounced in His name. The last chapter gives an account of the murmuring of Jonah at this instance of divine mercy, and of the gentle and condescending manner in which it pleased GOD to reprove the prophet for

his unjust complaint. God deferred the execution of His judgment till the increase of their iniquities made them ripe for destruction, about 150 years afterwards.

MICAH was a native of Morasthi, a village in the southern part of Judea, and is supposed to have prophesied about 750 years B.C. He was commissioned to denounce the judgments of God against the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, for their idolatry and wickedness. The principal predictions are the invasions of Shalmanezzer and Sennacherib, the destruction of Samaria and of Jerusalem, mixed with consolatory promises of the deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, and of the downfall of the power of their Assyrian and Babylonian oppressors; the cessation of prophecy in consequence of their continued deceitfulness and hypocrisy, and desolation in a then distant period still greater than that which was declared to be immediately impending. The birth of the Messiah at Bethlehem is also expressly foretold, and the Jews are directed to look to the establishment and extent of His kingdom, as an unfailing source of comfort amidst general distress. The contrast of the neglected duties of justice, mercy, humility, and piety, with the punctilious observance of the ceremonial sacrifices, affords a beautiful example of the harmony which subsists between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, and shows that the law partook, in some degree at least, of that spiritual nature which more immediately characterizes the religion of JESUS.

NAHUM is supposed to have been a native of

Elcosh, in Galilee, and to have been of the tribe of Simeon. It is believed that he delivered his predictions between the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, about 715 B.C. They relate solely to the destruction of Nineveh by the Babylonians and Medes, and are introduced by an animated display of the attributes of GOD. The preparation for the destruction of Nineveh, and the description of that destruction, are expressed in the most glowing colours.

HABAKKUK is supposed to have prophesied about 605 B.C., and to have been alive at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. It is believed that he remained and died in Judea. The principal predictions are the destruction of Jerusalem, the captivity of the Jews by the Chaldeans or Babylonians, their deliverance from the oppressor "at the appointed time," and the total ruin of the Babylonian empire. The promise of the Messiah is confirmed, the overruling providence of GOD is asserted, and the concluding prayer or rather hymn, recounts the wonders which GOD had wrought for His people when He led them from Egypt into Canaan, and expresses the most perfect confidence in the fulfilment of His promises.

ZEPHANIAH was the son of Cushi, and was probably of a noble family of the tribe of Simeon. He prophesied in the reign of Josiah, about 630 B.C. He denounces the judgments of GOD against the idolatry and sins of his countrymen, and exhorts them to repentance; he predicts the punishment of the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and Ethiopians, and foretells the destruction of Nineveh; he again

inveighs against the corruptions of Jerusalem, and with his threats mixes promises of future favour and prosperity to his people, whose recall from their dispersion shall glorify the name of God throughout the world.

HAGGAI was one of the Jews who returned with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem in consequence of the edict of Cyrus, and it is believed that he was born during the captivity, and that he was of the sacerdotal race. This book contains four revelations, all which took place in the second year of Darius, king of Persia, (520 B.C.) The prophet reproves the people for their delay in building the temple of God, and represents the unfruitful seasons which they had experienced as a divine punishment for this neglect. He exhorts them to proceed in the important work, and by way of encouragement he tells them that the glory of the second temple, however inferior in external magnificence, shall exceed that of the first, which was accomplished by its being honoured with the presence of the SAVIOUR of mankind. He again urges the completion of the temple, by promises of divine favour, and under the type of Zerubbabel he is supposed to foretell the great revolutions which shall precede the second advent of CHRIST.

ZECHARIAH was the son of Barachiah, and the grandson of Iddo. He was born during the captivity, and came to Jerusalem when the Jews were permitted by Cyrus to return to their own country. He began to prophesy two months later than Haggai, and continued to exercise his office about two years. Like his contemporary Haggai, Zechariah begins

with exhorting the Jews to proceed in the rebuilding of the temple; he promises them the aid and protection of GOD, and assures them of the speedy increase and prosperity of Jerusalem; he then emblematically describes the four great empires, and foretells the glory of the Christian Church when Jews and Gentiles shall be united under their great High Priest and Governor, JESUS CHRIST, of Whom Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor, were types; he predicts many particulars relative to our SAVIOUR and His kingdom, and to the future condition of the Jews. Many moral instructions and admonitions are interspersed throughout the work. Several learned men have supposed that the last six chapters were not written by Zechariah, their inspired authority however is established by their being quoted in three of the Gospels.

MALACHI prophesied about 400 B.C., and some traditionary accounts state that he was a native of Sapha, and of the tribe of Zebulun. He reproves the people for their wickedness, and the priests for their negligence in the discharge of their office; he threatens the disobedient with the judgments of GOD, and promises great rewards to the penitent and pious; he predicts the coming of CHRIST, and the preaching of John the Baptist, and with a solemnity becoming the last of the prophets, he closes the sacred canon with enjoining the strict observance of the Mosaic law, till the forerunner, already promised, should appear in the spirit of Elias, to introduce the Messiah, Who was to establish a new and everlasting covenant.



## THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

THE Jews had many revolutions of peace and war, and some changes in the mode of their government, from the time of their return from the Babylonian captivity to their complete subjection to the Romans, but their sacerdotal government, as it is sometimes called, continued with little interruption through the space of about 600 years. Having returned into their own country, under the sanction of Cyrus, they acknowledged the sovereignty of the kings of Persia, till that empire was overturned by Alexander the Great, they then became subject to his successors, first in Egypt, and afterwards in Syria, till, having been deprived of their religious and civil liberties for three years and a half by Antiochus Epiphanes, they were restored both to the exercise of their religion and to their ancient independence, by the piety and bravery of Mattathias and his descendants. Under these Maccabæan princes they became a free state, supported by good troops, strong garrisons, and alliances, not only with neighbouring powers, but with remote kingdoms, even Rome itself. This glory of the Jews was but of short duration, the decline of the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, followed by their entire ruin, by the great accession of power which it brought to the Romans, paved the way for the destruction of the commonwealth. Pompey compelled the Jews to submit to Rome, and from

that time their country was tributary to the Romans, although still governed by Maccabæan princes. The last of that family was conquered and deposed by Herod the Great, an Idumæan by birth, but of the Jewish religion, who had been appointed king of the Jews by the Romans, and enjoyed a long reign over Palestine, in the course of which he greatly diminished the civil power of the high priest. He was succeeded in the government of the greater part of Palestine by his son Archelaus, whose misconduct caused Augustus to banish him, and to reduce his dominions into a Roman province, and thus it appears that, with the exception of the short predicted tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, the kingdom of Judah, for some time independent, but generally tributary, continued to enjoy its own religion and the form of its civil government, till after the birth of the Messiah. During our SAVIOUR'S ministry the Jews were permitted to perform their religious worship without restraint or molestation, but Judea and Samaria were then governed by a Roman Procurator, who had power of life and death, and Galilee was governed under the authority of the Romans by Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, with the title of tetrarch.

The land of Canaan, so named from Canaan, the son of Ham, whose posterity possessed this land, as well as Egypt or Mizraim, lies in the western part of Asia, between latitude  $31^{\circ}$  and  $34^{\circ}$ . Its boundaries were, to the north, Cœle-Syria; to the west, the Mediterranean Sea; to the east, Arabia Deserta; and to the south and south-west, Arabia Petræa and Egypt. Its extent was about 200 miles from north

to south, (viz., from Dan to Beersheba,) and its breadth about 100. It was divided into two unequal parts, of which the western was considerably the greater, by the river Jordan, which rises in the mountains of Hermon, (a branch of the mountains of Libanus,) and running south through the lake of Gennesareth, or "the Sea of Tiberias or Galilee," after a course of 150 miles loses itself in the Dead Sea, which occupies the place where Sodom and Gomorrah once stood. The country to the east of the Jordan was given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. The kingdom of Moab lay to the south of Reuben, the kingdom of Ammon to the east of Gad, and the mountains of Hermon bounded Manasseh to the north-east, beyond which lay Trachonitis and Ituræa. West of the Jordan, to the north, were placed Naphtali, on the river, and Asher, which bordered on Phœnicia and the Mediterranean. Zebulun and Issachar had inland districts, but the other half tribe of Manasseh and Ephraim reached from the sea to the river. Dan (upon the coast) and Benjamin were south of Ephraim, and north of Simeon and Judah. The country allotted to Simeon bordered upon the Mediterranean, and extended to Egypt, but the Philistines, who inhabited the coast, were never entirely driven out of their possessions. The country of Judah bordered upon the Dead Sea, which separated it from the kingdom of Moab, (for both Simeon and Judah lay considerably more south than the tribe of Reuben,) and adjoined the mountainous country of Idumæa, or Edom, and Arabia Petræa, to the south. Jerusalem, or Hierosolyma, the capital,

supposed to have been the Salem of Melchisedek, stood partly in the territory of Benjamin, but was allotted to Judah, "the chief among the tribes of Israel." After the return from the Babylonian captivity the eastern division was called *Peræa* (more properly the country which had belonged to Reuben and Gad, for the northern part was included in the district of Trachonitis,) and the western part was divided into Galilee to the north, Judæa to the south, and Samaria in the middle. Judæa proper extended from the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean to Egypt, and included the countries of Benjamin, Dan, and Simeon, besides that of Judah. It was called Palestine from the Philistines, who inhabiting the western coast were first known to the Romans, and being by them corruptly called Palestines, gave that name to the country; but it was more commonly called Judæa, as the land of the Jews. Since our SAVIOUR's advent it has been called the Holy Land, but all distinction is now frequently lost in the general name of Syria, which is given to the whole country east of the Mediterranean, between the sea and the desert.

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### THE JEWISH SECTS.

WHILE the spirit of prophecy continued there were no religious sects among the Jews, the authority of the prophets being sufficient to prevent any difference of opinion. Almost all of them seem

to have arisen from the doctrines taught by the Scribes after the return from the Babylonian captivity. It is said in Judges v. 14, "out of Zebulun came they that handle the pen of the writer"—and the Rabbis state that the Scribes were chiefly of the tribe of Simeon, but it is thought that only those of the tribe of Levi were allowed to transcribe the holy Scriptures. In the reign of David, Seraiah, in the reign of Hezekiah, Shebna, and in the reign of Josiah, Shaphan are called Scribes, and are ranked with the chief officers of the kingdom, and Elishama the Scribe, in the reign of Jehoiakim, is mentioned among the Princes. We read also of the "principal Scribe of the host," or army, and it is probable that there were Scribes in other departments of the state. It appears that the office of ecclesiastical scribes was originally confined to writing copies of the Law, but the knowledge thus acquired soon led them to become instructors of the people in the written law, which it is believed they publicly read. Baruch was Scribe to Jeremiah, and Ezra is called "a ready Scribe in the law of Moses, having prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments," but there is no mention of the Scribes being formed into a distinct body of men till after the cessation of prophecy. When there ceased to be inspired teachers in Israel the Scribes presumed to interpret the Law and the Prophets in the schools and synagogues. Hence arose those numerous interpretations and opinions, or as they were called traditions, which so much perverted the text. These traditions were collected into six books,

and called the Mishna, or Repetition of the Oral Law, about the middle of the second century after CHRIST. The learned Jews made comments upon the Mishna, which they called the Gemara, or Complement, because by them the Mishna is fully explained. The Mishna and Gemara together make the Talmud. Soon the unauthorized maxim arose, that the oral or traditionary law was of divine origin as well as the written law of Moses, and thus became the principal source of all the Jewish sects. In process of time it even came to be asserted that when Moses was forty days on Mount Sinai he received from GOD two laws, the one in writing, the other oral, which had passed uncorrupted from generation to generation; and in some cases the law was expounded by the traditions, in direct opposition to its true meaning.

Herod consulted the Scribes concerning the time of the Messiah's birth, and our SAVIOUR speaks of them as sitting in Moses' seat, which implies that they taught the Law; and He foretold that He should be betrayed unto the chief Priests and Scribes, and that He should be put to death by them, which shows that they were men of great power.

*Scribes*, doctors of the Law, and lawyers were the same class of persons. They had scholars under their care, whom they taught the knowledge of the law, and who, in their schools, sat on low stools beneath their seats. Hence S. Paul's expression, that he was "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel." By our SAVIOUR's time, the Scribes had in some measure laid aside the written law, regarding it only

when it agreed with their traditionary expositions of it; and thus "they had made the Word of God of none effect through their traditions." This, in great measure, accounts for the blindness of the Jews, who were taught to expect a temporal Prince as their Messiah.

The principles by which the *Pharisees* were chiefly distinguished existed some time before they were formed into a regular sect. The earliest written account of them is that of Josephus, who states that they were a sect of considerable weight, when John Hyrcanus was high priest, 108 years B.C. Their name was derived from *Pharas*, a Hebrew word, signifying "set apart," because they affected an extraordinary sanctity. Their distinguishing dogma was a scrupulous adherence to the traditions of the elders, which they placed upon an equal footing with the written law. They were strict observers of external ceremonies, beyond what the law required, and were superstitiously exact in paying tithe of the most trifling articles, while in general they neglected the essential duties of moral virtue. They were of opinion that good works might claim reward from God, and ascribed extraordinary merit to the observance of rules which they had themselves established as works of supererogation. Of this sort were their frequent washings and fastings, their nice avoidance of reputed sinners, their rigorous observance of the Sabbath, and the long prayers which they ostentatiously "made in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets." "Trusting in themselves that they were righteous," they not only despised the rest of mankind, but were entirely destitute

of humility towards GOD, yet their specious sanctity and their hypocritical display of zeal for religion, gave them a vast influence over the people, and consequently great power in the Jewish state. The Pharisees believed in the immortality of the soul, in the resurrection of the dead, and in the existence of angels and spirits; and it is supposed that they believed in the pre-existence of souls, a doctrine which seems to have been commonly held in our SAVIOUR'S time. The question of CHRIST'S disciples, relative to the blind man, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" and the doubts expressed by the people, whether CHRIST was John the Baptist, or Elias, or one of the ancient prophets, seem to have arisen from some opinion of this sort. S. Luke expressly says that the Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead. It is erroneous therefore to believe that the Pharisees held the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls. When S. Paul professed himself a Pharisee, and declared, that of the "hope and resurrection of the dead, he was called in question," the Pharisees supported him, acknowledging that he preached a doctrine conformable to the principles of their own sect. It is therefore to be concluded that the Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead, though their notions upon this important point were not correct and accurate.

It is said that the principles of the *Sadducees* were derived from Antigonus Sochæus, president of the Sanhedrim, about 250 years B.C., who, rejecting the traditionary doctrines of the Scribes, taught that man ought to serve GOD out of pure love, and not



from hope of reward, or fear of punishment; and that they derived their name from Sadoc, one of his followers, who, mistaking or perverting this doctrine, maintained that there was no future state of rewards and punishments. It is certain that in the time of our SAVIOUR the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead, and the existence of angels and spirits, or souls of departed men, though it is not easy to comprehend how they could at the same time admit the authority of the law of Moses. They maintained that men were absolutely masters of their own actions, and at full liberty to do either good or evil. Josephus even says that they denied the essential difference between good and evil; and though they believed that God created and preserved the world, they seem to have denied His particular providence. These tenets led to great profligacy of life: and we find the licentious wickedness of the Sadducees frequently condemned in the New Testament; yet they professed themselves obliged to observe the Mosaic law, because of the temporal rewards and punishments annexed to such observance; and hence they were always severe in their punishment of any crimes which tended to disturb the public tranquillity. The Sadducees rejected all tradition. They expected the Messiah with impatience, but confining all their hopes to this present world, they might well be anxious that their lot of life should be cast in the splendid reign of this expected temporal king; but this expectation was so contrary to the lowly appearance of our SAVIOUR that they joined their enemies, the Pharisees, in persecuting Him and His religion.

The Sadducees were far less numerous than the Pharisees, but they were generally persons of greater opulence and dignity. The council, before whom both our SAVIOUR and S. Paul were carried, consisted partly of Pharisees and partly of Sadducees.

The *Nazarites* were of two sorts; such as were by their parents devoted to GOD in their infancy, and such as devoted themselves, either for life or for a limited time; the former were called *Nazaræi nativi*, and the latter, *Nazaræi votivi*. The only three instances of the former mentioned in Scripture, are Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist. Nazaritism was a divine institution, and it was very common for Jews, both men and women, "to vow a vow of a Nazarite" in order to give themselves up to reading, meditation, and prayer, for the purpose of moral purification, and "all the days of their separation they were holy unto the LORD." The laws concerning the Nazarites are contained in the sixth chapter of Numbers.

The *Herodians* may perhaps be considered as a political rather than as a religious sect, but among the Jews religious and civil opinions were almost necessarily blended. It seems that the Herodians were a set of men strongly attached to the family of Herod, and of very profligate principles. CHRIST charged His disciples to "beware of the leaven of Herod." These men from their high regard to Herod would naturally be zealous for the authority of the Romans, by whose means Herod was made, and continued, king, and it is probable that they might incline to conform to Roman customs in some particulars which the law would not allow, and

especially in the admission of images, though not in the idolatrous use of them. Herod's attempt to set up a golden eagle over the east gate of the temple is well known. These complaisant courtiers would no doubt defend it, and the same temper might discover itself in other instances.

The *Galilæans* are mentioned in Scripture, in strong terms of censure, as a turbulent and seditious sect; and Josephus speaks of them as a very considerable sect, and ascribes to them a great part of the calamities of his country. Their leader was Judas of Galilee, who was followed at first but by a small part of the Pharisees, but by degrees the Galilæans swallowed up almost all the other sects; and it is most probable that the Zealots, mentioned at the siege of Jerusalem, were of this sect.

The *Publicans* were not of any sect, but merely tax-gatherers and collectors of customs due to the Romans. These offices, formerly conferred upon none but Roman citizens of the equestrian order, were held, at the time they are mentioned in Scripture, by persons of low condition, and the employment was deemed base and infamous. Considering themselves as a free people, under immediate government of God, the Jews bore with impatience the taxes imposed by the Romans, and even questioned whether it were "lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar." The Publicans were generally Jews, who, farming the customs of the Romans, were too often led by motives of avarice to be extortioners also, and the people could ill endure these rigorous exactions from their brethren, who thus appeared to join with the Romans in endeavouring to entail perpetual subjec-

tion upon their nation, or at least in making the yoke more galling; besides, the necessary dealings and connection of the Publicans with the Gentiles, which the Jews held to be unlawful, cast a peculiar odium upon the whole body; and thus our SAVIOUR was reproached for being "a friend of Publicans and sinners."

*Proselytes* are mentioned in Scripture in contradistinction to Jews, and are defined as persons who being Gentiles by birth came over to the Jewish religion in whole or in part. It is allowed that the Jewish nation was gradually made up of two descriptions of people, those who were descended from Abraham, and those who, being originally Gentiles, were naturalized, and considered as Jews after a certain number of generations, which seem to have been less or more, according to the merit and other circumstances of their respective nations. Certain it is, the law made a difference between one nation and another as to what is called "entering into the congregation of the LORD"—viz., being permitted to bear any office in the Jewish commonwealth. Those Proselytes who took upon themselves the obligation of the whole Law are supposed to have been called Proselytes of Righteousness, or of the Covenant, and were entitled to the same privileges as the seed of Abraham, though considered inferior. The Proselytes of the Gate are said to have been such Gentiles as were permitted by the Jews to dwell among them, and were admitted to the worship of the GOD of Israel, and the hope of a future life, but did not engage to observe the whole of the law; these were not circumcised, nor did they con-

form to the Mosaic ordinances, being only obliged to observe the laws which the Jews called the seven precepts of Noah—viz., to abstain from idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, and theft, to appoint upright judges, and not to eat the flesh of any animal cut off while it was alive. They were allowed to pray in the Temple and synagogues, but not to enter further in than the outer court, which was called the court of the Gentiles, and in the synagogues they sat apart. There appears however to be no Scriptural ground for this distinction of Proselytes of the Gate, and Proselytes of Righteousness.

The *Essenes* appear to have been a small enthusiastic sect, but little known; directly opposite to the Pharisees with respect to their reliance upon tradition and scrupulous regard to the ceremonial law, but like them pretending to superior sanctity of manners. They existed in the time of our SAVIOUR, and though they are not mentioned in the New Testament, they are supposed to be alluded to by S. Paul, in his Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, and in his First Epistle to Timothy. They believed in the immortality of the soul; they were absolute predestinarians; they held the Scriptures in the highest reverence, but considered them as mystic writings, and expounded them allegorically; they were industrious, quiet, and free from every species of vice; and it is supposed that the austere and retired life of the Essenes gave rise to monkish superstition.

The *Karaites* have their name from the Chaldee word Kara, Scriptura Sacra, because they adhered to Scripture as the whole and only rule of faith and

practice, admitting the authority of tradition only when it agreed with the written word of God. Upon the dissension between Hillel the president of the Sanhedrim, and Shammai the vice-president, about thirty years B.C., their respective scholars formed two parties. Those who adhered to Scripture only were called Karaim, or Scripturarii—and were followers of Shammai; and those who were zealous for the traditions taught by the Scribes or Rabbis, were called Rabbanim, Rabbanists, and were followers of Hillel. The Karaites justly boasted the antiquity of their principles as being the followers of Moses and of the Prophets, in opposition to human tradition; but when the doctrines of the Rabbis were generally adopted among the Jews, the Karaites were considered as schismatics. They seem to have remained some time in obscurity, but about A.D. 750, Anan, a Jew of Babylon, of the stock of David, and Saul, his son, both men of learning, publicly disclaimed the authority of the traditionary doctrines of the Talmud, asserted the Scriptures to be the sole rule of faith, and became heads of the Karaites. There are now some of this sect in Poland and Russia, but they chiefly reside in Turkey and Egypt. Thus it appears that a remnant has been always left, who confined their faith to the written word of God; and the Karaites are universally reckoned men of the best learning, of the greatest piety, and of the purest morals of the whole nation.

## THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE Canon of the New Testament consists of twenty-seven books, written by eight different authors, all of whom were contemporary with our SAVIOUR. These books were written at different times, and at places remote from each other; and when the latest of them was published, the Gospel had been preached, and churches founded in many parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa. Different churches at first received different books, according to their situation and circumstances; their Canons were gradually enlarged; and it was not long before the same, or very nearly the same, books were acknowledged by the Christians of all countries. The Canon of the New Testament was not determined by the authority of councils,—the persecutions under which the professors of the Gospel continually laboured, preventing for several centuries any general assembly of Christians,—but the books, of which it consists, were known to be the genuine writings of the Apostles and the Evangelists, in the same way as we know the works of Cæsar, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, to be theirs; and the Canon has been formed upon the ground of unanimous, or generally concurring tradition. The first writer, who has left us a regular catalogue of the books of the New Testament is Origen, who lived in the beginning of the third century, al-

though they are all mentioned separately by much earlier authors. This catalogue is the same as our present Canon, except that it omits the epistles of S. James and S. Jude; but Origen, in other parts of his writings, refers to these epistles as the productions of those Apostles. We learn from Polycarp, who was contemporary with the Apostles, and from other authors who lived in the second century, that the primitive Church admitted no other Gospels but those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These, and many other authors assure us, that the Scriptures of the New Testament were publicly read in Christian congregations. Some few works of the apostolical fathers were also read in the churches of some places, but they were not received as sacred Scriptures. In like manner we read certain parts of the Apocryphal books in our churches, although those books are not admitted into our Canon. They are read, as the sixth article of our Church states, "for example of life, and instruction of manners, but are not applied to establish any doctrine." Copies of the New Testament were dispersed everywhere. Christians of every denomination appealed to them in all their various controversies as authentic testimony; and both the Jewish and Pagan enemies of the Gospel understood that they contained the faith of Christians.

The publicity of these books rendered designed corruption impracticable; it is, however, to be expected, that the purity of these books should have suffered in a long series of years, from the negligence of transcribers. The most minute care has



been employed in collating the manuscripts of every part of the New Testament, and a considerable number of various readings has been discovered ; but they are not of such a nature as to affect any essential article of our faith, or any indispensable rule of life. It seems indeed to have been wisely ordered by a kind Providence, that no important doctrine or precept should rest upon a single text of Scripture, nor even upon the credit of one writer ; and therefore we are never compelled to have recourse to a disputed passage in support of any fundamental principle of our religion ; and while we contend that a single inspired authority is a sufficient proof of any proposition in theology or morals, we acknowledge that the different writers of the New Testament, by their perfect agreement in all material points, confirm and strengthen each other, and that the Gospel derives great advantages from the number and consistency of the witnesses to its truth.

The four Gospels, the first thirteen Epistles of S. Paul, the first Epistle of S. Peter, and the first Epistle of S. John, were always acknowledged to be written by the persons whose names they bear, and the Acts of the Apostles by S. Luke. The genuineness of the other seven books, viz. the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of S. James, the second Epistle of S. Peter, the second and third Epistles of S. John, the Epistle of S. Jude, and the Revelation, was never denied by the Catholic Church ; doubts only were entertained at a very early period concerning the right of these books to be admitted into the Canon, because sufficient evi-

dence had not been received at *all* places that they were really apostolical writings; but as soon as the necessary inquiries had been made, the genuineness of them all was universally allowed. This circumstance, therefore, of temporary doubt, instead of invalidating the authority of these books, gives a sanction to the whole collection, by proving the caution with which any book was admitted into the sacred Canon. Indeed, the early Christians had such means of knowing the truth, and exercised so much care and judgment in settling the Canon of the New Testament, that no writing which was pronounced by them genuine, has been found to be spurious, nor any genuine which they rejected. All the early adversaries of Christianity admitted that the books of the New Testament were all written by the persons whose names they bear. The books of the New Testament have been arranged differently at different periods, but it is believed that the order in which they stand in our Bible is the most ancient. These books may be divided into four parts, namely, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Revelation.

The four Gospels contain, each of them, the history of our SAVIOUR's life and ministry; but no one of the Evangelists undertook to give an account of all the miracles which CHRIST performed, or of all the instructions which He delivered. Every one of them is sufficiently full to prove that JESUS was the promised Messiah, the SAVIOUR of the world, who had been predicted by a long succession of prophets, and whose advent was expected at the time of His appearance, both by Jews and Gentiles.

S. Mark and S. Luke follow nearly the same order of facts; but S. Matthew in this respect often differs from them both. The Gospel of S. John has very little matter in common with the other three Gospels.

The Acts contain an account of the first preaching of the Apostles, and of the establishment of Christianity in different places of Asia and Europe. This history extends to about thirty years after the ascension of our SAVIOUR.

The Epistles were written by different Apostles to single persons, to the churches of certain cities or districts, or to the whole body of Christians then in the world. They are not to be considered as regular treatises upon the Christian religion, though its most essential doctrines are occasionally explained. These letters were intended to confirm those to whom they were addressed, in the true faith and practice of the Gospel, to guard them against prevailing corruptions, to warn them of impending dangers, to animate them under persecutions, or to correct irregularities and false opinions; in short, to furnish them with rules of conduct suited to their respective circumstances. They inform us of the state of the primitive Church, and of the errors and controversies existing in the apostolical times, and contain truths and precepts highly important to Christians of every age.

The Apocalypse, or Revelation, is a book written in a sublime and mysterious style, containing a long series of prophecies of all the great events which were to take place in the Christian Church, and calculated by their gradual fulfilment to afford

to every succeeding age additional testimony to the divine origin of our holy religion.

The Apostles were constant attendants upon our SAVIOUR during His ministry, and "when they were alone He expounded all things to His disciples." He showed Himself alive to the Apostles after His Passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen by them forty days, and "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of GOD." He promised after His departure they should receive farther assistance. "I will pray the FATHER, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive." "The Comforter, which is the HOLY GHOST, Whom the FATHER will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." These promises were accurately fulfilled. After the day of Pentecost, when the HOLY GHOST visibly descended upon the Apostles, they are represented as "full of the HOLY GHOST," "speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance," uniformly teaching and acting under His immediate influence, and confirming the Divine authority of their doctrines by the performance of miracles. Of the eight writers of the New Testament five were among these inspired preachers of the word of GOD, viz., Matthew, John, James, Peter, and Jude. If therefore the HOLY SPIRIT guided and directed the Apostles while they were orally delivering the religion of CHRIST, He would not withdraw His influence when they sat down to write that same

religion. The assurance that the Spirit should abide with the Apostles *for ever*, must necessarily imply a constant Inspiration, without change or intermission, whenever they exercised the office of a teacher of the Gospel, whether by writing or by speaking.

S. Mark and S. Luke were not Apostles, but only companions and assistants of those who were Apostles, yet there is the strongest reason to believe that they were partakers of the extraordinary effusion of the HOLY SPIRIT granted to the disciples of CHRIST; and such was the unanimous opinion of the primitive Christians. It is universally acknowledged that these two Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, were considered as canonical Scripture from the earliest time. If the Church had not heard from the Apostles that the writings of their assistants were divine, these writings would not have been received into the sacred Canon.

The Gospels contain but a small part of the transactions of our SAVIOUR's life, and therefore the Evangelists were supernaturally enabled to make a selection from this mass of materials, and they were directed to record such things as were best calculated to convey a just idea of the religion of CHRIST.

S. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, says, "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of JESUS CHRIST." In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, he says, "I speak this by permission, and not by commandment;" and soon after, "to the rest speak I, not the LORD."

By thus declaring that upon some subjects he only delivered his own private opinion (though always under the superintending influence of the HOLY SPIRIT) he plainly implies, that upon other occasions he wrote under the especial authority of GOD Himself, and in this very chapter he says, "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the LORD." Hence it follows that the Apostles had some certain method of distinguishing that knowledge which was the effect of Inspiration from the ordinary suggestions of their own reason. In the same Epistle he says, in speaking of the doctrines of the Gospel, "GOD hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit . . . . Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the HOLY GHOST teacheth." In his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, he says, "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but GOD, who hath also given unto us His HOLY SPIRIT." In asserting his own Inspiration, he asserts that of all the other Apostles. In the two last passages quoted, he speaks in the plural number, and in his Epistle to the Ephesians, he expressly asserts the inspiration of himself, and of the other teachers of the Gospel; "Ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of GOD which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit."

The books of the New Testament contain various predictions, many of which have been literally fulfilled, and others are now receiving their completion,

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and this is of itself sufficient proof that these books were written under the direction of the Spirit of God.

Everything which the Apostles have written or taught concerning Christianity, everything which teaches us a religious sentiment, or a branch of duty, we must consider as *divinely true*, as the mind and will of God, recorded under the guidance of His Spirit. It is not necessary to inquire whether what the Apostles taught be *true*; all we have to search after is their *meaning*; and we may rest assured that meaning is *divine infallible truth*. The testimony of men who wrote by the Spirit of God is the testimony of God Himself.

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## THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

### S. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

MATTHEW, called also Levi, was the son of Alphæus. He was a native of Galilee. Though a Jew, he was a publican or tax-gatherer under the Romans, and his office seems to have consisted in collecting the customs due upon commodities which were carried, and from persons who passed, over the Lake of Gennesareth. Our SAVIOUR commanded him, as he was sitting at the place where he received these customs, to follow Him. He immediately obeyed; and from that time he became a constant attendant upon our SAVIOUR, and was appointed one of the twelve Apostles. Matthew, soon after his call, made an entertainment at his house, at which were

present CHRIST and some of His disciples, and also several publicans. After the Ascension of our SAVIOUR he continued with the other Apostles, to preach the Gospel for some time in Judæa, but it is uncertain into what country he afterwards went, and when and how he died. It seems probable that he died a natural death.

Papias, the companion of Polycarp, who was contemporary with the Apostles, is the earliest author upon record, who has expressly named Matthew as the writer of a Gospel. In his time no doubt was entertained of the genuineness of S. Matthew's Gospel. It is generally agreed, upon the most satisfactory evidence, that it was the first which was written, but the exact time when he wrote it is doubtful; it must, however, have been written between the years 38 and 64 A.D., probably the earliest date, for we may conceive that the Apostles would be desirous of losing no time in writing an account of the miracles which JESUS performed, and of the discourses which He delivered, because the sooner such an account was published the easier it would be to inquire into its truth and accuracy. Papias, and other ancient Fathers, assert positively that this Gospel was written by S. Matthew in Hebrew, viz., in the language then spoken in Palestine, and this point does not seem to have been controverted for 1400 years. Jerome observes that most of the quotations from the Old Testament in this Gospel are made according to the Hebrew text, assigning as the reason, because S. Matthew wrote in Hebrew. These quotations in other parts of the New Testament are made from the Septuagint or



Greek version. That the first published Gospel should be written in the language of the Jews, and for their peculiar use, is perfectly conformable to the distinction with which we know they were favoured of having the Gospel preached to them exclusively by our SAVIOUR, and before all other nations by His Apostles. Though the Fathers are unanimous in declaring that S. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, yet Jerome tells us, that in his time, A.D. 392, it was not known who was the translator of it into Greek. It was however made very early, and more used than the original. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews' language, and everything which belonged to them, fell into contempt, and the early Fathers writing in Greek, would naturally refer to the Greek copy of S. Matthew's Gospel, in the same way as they used the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. There being no longer any country in which the language of S. Matthew's original Gospel was commonly spoken, that original would soon be forgotten; and the translation into Greek, the language then generally understood, would be substituted in its room. This early and exclusive use of the Greek translation is strong proof of its correctness.

S. Matthew is more circumstantial in his account than any other of the Evangelists. There are more references in this than in any other Gospel to Jewish customs; places in Palestine are always mentioned in it as being well known by those to whom it is addressed. No sentiment relative to the Messiah was more prevalent among the Jews, than that He should be of the race of Abraham, and

family of David, and accordingly S. Matthew begins his narrative by showing the descent of JESUS from those two illustrious persons; and he omits no opportunity of pointing out the fulfilment of prophecy, which was known to have greater weight with the Jews than any other evidence; moreover, he records many of our SAVIOUR's reproofs to the Jews for their errors and superstitions, and thus endeavours to eradicate those prejudices which impeded the progress of the Christian faith.

That which principally distinguishes Matthew, is the distinctness with which he has related many of our LORD's discourses and moral instructions. He has also wonderfully united simplicity and energy in relating the replies of his Master to the cavils of His adversaries. The most remarkable things recorded in S. Matthew's Gospel, and not found in any other, are: the visit of the Eastern Magi, our SAVIOUR's flight into Egypt, the slaughter of the Infants at Bethlehem, the parable of the Ten Virgins, the dream of Pilate's wife, the resurrection of many saints at our SAVIOUR's Crucifixion; and the bribing of the Roman guard appointed to watch at the holy sepulchre, by the chief priests and elders.

#### S. MARK'S GOSPEL.

MARK, the Evangelist, is believed to have been that John, whose surname was Mark, mentioned in the Acts and in some of S. Paul's Epistles, as the son of Mary, who was an early convert to the religion of CHRIST. S. Peter, when he was delivered out of prison by an angel, went to her house,

where he found "many gathered together praying." Thence it is inferred that the Christians were accustomed to meet at Mary's house, even in these times of persecution, and that there was an early acquaintance between S. Peter and S. Mark. Mark was the nephew of Barnabas, being his sister's son; and he is supposed to have been converted to the Gospel by S. Peter, who calls him his son. He went in the year 44, from Jerusalem to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas. He afterwards set out with them upon a journey, which those Apostles undertook by the direction of the HOLY SPIRIT, for the purpose of preaching the Gospel in different countries; but he soon left them, probably without sufficient reason, at Perga, in Pamphylia, and went to Jerusalem. Afterwards, when Paul and Barnabas determined to visit the several churches which they had established, Barnabas proposed that they should take Mark with them, to which Paul objected, because Mark had left them in their former journey. This produced a contention between Paul and Barnabas, which ended in their separation. Mark accompanied his uncle Barnabas to Cyprus. We may conclude that S. Paul was afterwards reconciled to S. Mark, from the manner in which he subsequently mentions him in his epistles, and from his direction to Timothy, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry." It is believed, on the authority of ancient writers, that soon after his journey with Barnabas he met Peter in Asia, and continued with him for some time. Epiphanius, Eusebius, and Jerome (of the fourth century,) assert that Mark preached the Gospel in

Egypt; and the two latter call him Bishop of Alexandria. Jerome states that he died in the eighth year of Nero, and was buried at Alexandria. Papias, A.D. 116, and several ancient Fathers, say that Mark was not a hearer of CHRIST Himself. There is reason to believe that he was converted to the belief of the Gospel by S. Peter.

The earliest ecclesiastical writer upon record who expressly mentions S. Mark's Gospel is Papias; but the works of many others of the ancient Fathers contain numerous quotations from it, and their testimony remains uncontradicted by any ancient writer.

All agree that the writer of this Gospel was the familiar companion of S. Peter. Many things honourable to S. Peter are omitted in it, which are mentioned by the other Evangelists; and it is quite conformable to S. Peter's character, that he should not, either in public or private, notice circumstances of that kind; but on the other hand, the failings of Peter are all recorded in this Gospel. Thus S. Mark does not add the benediction and promise which S. Peter received from our SAVIOUR, upon his acknowledging Him to be the Messiah; but he relates the severe reproof which he received soon after, for not bearing to hear that CHRIST must suffer. Eusebius, A.D. 315, writes that "The lustre of piety so enlightened the minds of Peter's hearers (at Rome,) that they were not contented with the bare hearing and unwritten instruction of his divine preaching, but they earnestly requested Mark, whose Gospel we have, being an attendant upon Peter, to leave with them a written account of the instruc-

tions which had been delivered to them by word of mouth; nor did they desist till they had prevailed upon him; and thus they were the cause of the writing of that Gospel, which is called according to Mark; and they say, that the Apostle, being informed of what was done, by the revelation of the HOLY GHOST, was pleased with the zeal of the men, and authorized the writing to be introduced into the churches. Clement, (contemporary of the Apostles,) gives this account in the sixth book of his Institutions; and Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, bears testimony to it."

It is believed that this Gospel was written about A.D. 65. S. Mark having written this Gospel for the use of the Christians at Rome, at that time the great metropolis of all civilized nations, we find it free from all peculiarities. Quotations from the prophets, and allusions to Jewish customs, are as much as possible avoided; and such explanations added as might be necessary for Gentile readers at Rome: thus when Jordan is first mentioned, the word river is prefixed; the oriental word Corban, is said to mean a gift; the preparation is said to be the day before the Sabbath, and defiled hands are said to mean unwashed hands.

S. Mark is in general much less circumstantial than S. Matthew, and usually follows his arrangement. The miraculous cures recorded at the end of the seventh chapter, and in the middle of the eighth, are not found in any other Gospel.

## S. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

S. LUKE is not named in any of the Gospels. In the Acts of the Apostles, which were written by him, he uses the term *we*, when relating some of the travels of S. Paul, and thus it is inferred that at those times he was with that Apostle. Thus we learn that S. Luke accompanied S. Paul in his first voyage to Macedonia. From Samothracia they went to Neapolis, and thence to Philippi. Here we conclude they separated, because in continuing S. Paul's history, after he left Philippi, S. Luke says, "Now when *they* had passed through Amphipolis—" and he does not resume the *we* till S. Paul was in Greece the second time.

When S. Paul was about to go to Jerusalem from Greece after his second visit into that country, S. Luke, mentioning certain persons, says, "These going before tarried for *us* at Troas; and *we* sailed away from Philippi." Thus again we learn that Luke accompanied Paul out of Greece, through Macedonia, to Troas; and from the Acts, and some of S. Paul's Epistles, we learn that while he was a prisoner at Rome, S. Luke continued with him till he was released from his confinement, which lasted about five years. Here ends the certain account of Luke. It seems probable, however, that he went from Rome to Achaia; and some authors have asserted that he afterwards preached the Gospel in Africa. None of the most ancient Fathers having mentioned that S. Luke suffered martyrdom, we may suppose that he died a natural death, but at what time or place is not known. It is probable

that S. Luke was by birth a Jew, and a native of Antioch, in Syria; and there seems no reason to doubt that he was the "Luke, the beloved physician" mentioned in the Epistle to the Colossians. There appears no foundation in any ancient writer for the opinion that S. Luke was a painter, or that in the earlier part of his life he was a slave.

Though passages taken from this Gospel are to be found in some of the writings of the earliest Fathers, the first who actually mentions it is Irenæus, A.D. 178. He cites many passages, and points out many peculiarities in it, so that he alone is sufficient to prove its genuineness. However, his testimony is supported by many others. It is probable that S. Luke published his Gospel in the year 63, soon after S. Paul's release from imprisonment at Rome, and that it was published in Greece for the use of Gentile converts. The Evangelist has inserted many explanations, particularly concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, apparently for those unacquainted with the customs of the Jews. We must conclude that the histories of our SAVIOUR, referred to in the preface to this Gospel, were defective, or S. Luke would not have undertaken this work. Being merely human compositions, and perhaps put together in haste, they were full of errors. They are now lost, and the names of their authors not known. When the four authentic Gospels were published, all others were quickly disregarded.

Many ancient writers consider this Gospel as having the sanction of S. Paul, in the same manner as S. Mark's had that of S. Peter. Whoever will

examine the Evangelist's and the Apostle's account of the Eucharist in their original works, will observe great coincidence of expression. (Compare S. Luke xxii. with 1 Cor. xi.)

S. Luke seems to have had more learning than any other of the Evangelists. His superiority in style may be owing to his longer residence in Greece, and greater acquaintance with Gentiles of good education. This Gospel contains many things not found in the other Gospels, among which are the following: the birth of John the Baptist, the Roman census in Judea, the circumstances attending CHRIST's birth at Bethlehem, the vision granted to the Shepherds, the early testimony of Simeon and Anna, CHRIST's conversation with the Doctors in the Temple when He was twelve years old, the Parables of the Good Samaritan, of the Prodigal Son, of Dives and Lazarus, of the wicked Judge, and of the Publican and Pharisee; the miraculous cure of the woman bowed down by illness eighteen years, the cleansing of the ten lepers, the restoring to life the son of a widow at Nain, the account of Zacchæus and of the penitent thief; and the particulars of the journey to Emmaus. Irenæus in the second century, noticed most of these peculiarities, which proves not only that S. Luke's Gospel, but that the other Gospels also are the same as they were then.

#### S. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

JOHN was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and younger brother of James the Great, with whom he



was brought up as a fisherman, and with whom he was called to be a Disciple and Apostle of CHRIST. We learn from the three other Evangelists that his call took place when he and his brother were fishing upon the Sea of Galilee, and early in our SAVIOUR's ministry. S. Mark informs us that our SAVIOUR surnamed these brothers Boanerges, that is, Sons of thunder, which title we may understand as prophetic of the zeal and resolution with which they would bear testimony to the Gospel truths. James and John, according to the Jewish prejudices, considered the Messiah's kingdom as of a temporal nature, and applied to our SAVIOUR for situations of honour in it. S. Mark relates that this application was made by the Apostles, and S. Matthew that it was made by their mother for them in their presence; but both Evangelists represent our SAVIOUR's answer as directed to the Apostles. These brothers also incurred a reproof for showing a similar ignorance of the nature of their Master's kingdom, when they desired to be allowed to call fire from heaven to consume some Samaritans, who had refused to receive our SAVIOUR, because He was going to Jerusalem: "CHRIST turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

John was one of the four Apostles to whom our LORD delivered His predictions relative to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the approaching calamities of the Jewish nation. Peter, James, and John were chosen to accompany our SAVIOUR upon

several occasions, when the other Apostles were not permitted to be present, viz., when CHRIST restored the daughter of Jairus to life, when He was transfigured on the Mount, and when He endured His agony in the garden. Peter and John were entrusted to make preparations for our SAVIOUR's eating the last Passover; but John had alone the distinction of leaning upon his Master's bosom, and of being called the beloved disciple of the SAVIOUR of Mankind. That he was treated by CHRIST with greater familiarity than the other Apostles, is evident from Peter desiring him to ask CHRIST who should betray Him, when he himself did not dare to propose the question. He seems to have been the only Apostle present at the crucifixion, and to him JESUS, as He was expiring upon the cross, gave the strongest proof of His confidence, by consigning to him the care of His Mother. As John had been witness to our SAVIOUR's death, by seeing the blood and water issue from His side, which a soldier had pierced, so he was one of the first made acquainted with His resurrection. He was one of those to whom our SAVIOUR appeared at the Sea of Galilee; and he was with the other ten Apostles a witness of His ascension into heaven. John continued to preach the Gospel for some time at Jerusalem; he was imprisoned by the Sanhedrim, first with Peter only, and afterwards with the other Apostles.

Some time after this second release, John and Peter were sent by the other Apostles to the Samaritans, whom Philip the Deacon had converted to the Gospel, that "through them they might receive

the HOLY GHOST." With this journey the Scripture history of S. John ends, except that he informs us in the Revelation that he was banished to Patmos, an island in the Ægean Sea. The unanimous voice of antiquity agrees in attributing this exile to Domitian. It is certain that S. John lived in Asia Minor the latter part of his life, and principally at Ephesus. He planted churches at Smyrna, Pergamos, Laodicea, and many other places; and by his activity and success in propagating the Gospel, he is supposed to have incurred the displeasure of Domitian. He himself tells us that he "was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of GOD, and for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST." And Irenæus, in the second century, speaking of the vision which he had there, says, "It is not very long ago that it was seen, being but a little before our time, at the latter end of Domitian's reign."

Upon Nerva's succeeding to the empire, in the year 96, S. John returned to Ephesus, and died there at an advanced age, in the third year of Trajan's reign, A.D. 100. It is believed that John was the youngest Apostle, and that he survived the rest.

The genuineness of S. John's Gospel has always been unanimously admitted by the Christian Church, and there are manifest allusions to it in the writings of Hermas and Ignatius, who were contemporaries of the Apostles. It is universally agreed that S. John published his Gospel in Asia; and that when he wrote it, he had seen the other three Gospels; it is therefore a tacit confirmation of them. It ap-

pears that this Gospel was written about A.D. 97, both from external and internal evidence. It is evident that the Evangelist considers those whom he addresses as but little acquainted with Jewish customs and names. Explanations of this kind were observed in the two preceding Gospels; but in this they are more marked, and occur much more frequently, the reason of which may be, that when S. John wrote, many more Gentiles, and of more distant countries, had been converted to Christianity, and it had become necessary to explain to the Christian Church thus extended, many circumstances which needed no explanation while its members belonged only to the neighbourhood of Judea, and while the Jewish polity was still in existence.

The immediate design of S. John in writing his Gospel, seems to have been to refute the Gnostics, Cerinthians, Ebionites, and other heretics, whose various tenets all originated from erroneous opinions concerning the person of CHRIST and the creation of the world. S. John therefore undertook at the request of the true believers in Asia, to write what Clement of Alexandria, in the second century, called a spiritual Gospel, and accordingly we find in it more of doctrine, and less of historical narrative than in any of the others. From the omission of our SAVIOUR's nativity, baptism, temptation, of the appointment of the Apostles, of the institution of Baptism, or of the LORD's Supper,—we may conclude that S. John supposed his readers to be acquainted with the other three Gospels. He chiefly confines himself to those occur-

rences which had been omitted by his predecessors. Let it be remembered, that this book, which contains so much additional information relative to the doctrines of Christianity, and which is a standard of faith for all ages, was written by that Apostle who enjoyed, in a greater degree than the rest, the affection and confidence of the Divine Author of our religion, and to whom was given a special revelation concerning the state of the Christian Church in all succeeding generations. The other Gospels having been written before any divisions arose among Christians, appear to have the evidences of Christianity for their principal object, and chiefly state the leading facts of our LORD's ministry, and the general instructions which He delivered. S. John has expressly mentioned three Passovers; and in another place he says, "After this there was a feast of the Jews." As in the other instances, John tells us that the feasts were passovers, and in this does not, the inference is that this was some other feast, and from thence it appears that S. John's history, and consequently our SAVIOUR's ministry extended over a period of somewhat more than two years. S. John is generally considered the least learned writer of the New Testament; but this defect is amply compensated by the unexamplified simplicity with which he expresses the sublimest truths, and by the affection, zeal, and veneration for his Divine Master, so conspicuous in every page of his Gospel.

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THIS book was written by S. Luke. There are many allusions to it in the works of those Fathers who were contemporary with the Apostles, and there are few things recorded in this book which are not mentioned by Irenæus, A.D. 178. The name of S. Luke is prefixed to this book in several ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, and in the old Syriac version.

This is the only inspired work which gives any historical account of the progress of Christianity after our SAVIOUR'S ascension. It comprehends a period of about thirty years, but it by no means contains a general history of the Church during that time.

The chief facts recorded are the choice of Matthias to be an Apostle in the room of the traitor Judas; the descent of the HOLY GHOST on the day of Pentecost; the preaching, miracles, and sufferings of the Apostles at Jerusalem; the death of Stephen, the first Martyr; the persecution and dispersion of the Christians; the preaching of the Gospel in different parts of Palestine, especially in Samaria; the conversion of S. Paul; the call of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert; the persecution of the Christians by Herod Agrippa; the preaching of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles, by the express command of the HOLY GHOST; the decree made at Jerusalem, declaring that circumcision, and a conformity to other Jewish rites and ceremonies, were not necessary in Gentile converts; and the latter part of the book is confined to the

history of S. Paul, of whom S. Luke was the constant companion for several years.

It appears that this book was written about A.D. 64. The place of its publication is doubtful, but it was probably Greece.

It was of the utmost importance to have an authentic account of the promised descent of the HOLY GHOST, and of the success which attended the first preachers of the Gospel both among the Jews and Gentiles. These great events completed the evidence of the divine mission of CHRIST, established the truth and universality of the religion which He taught, and pointed out in the clearest manner, the comprehensive nature of the redemption which He purchased by His death.

#### S. PAUL.

S. PAUL was born at Tarsus, the principal city of Cilicia, and was by birth both a Jew and a citizen of Rome. He is first mentioned by his Hebrew name of Saul, and afterwards by the Roman name Paul. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and of the sect of the Pharisees. In his youth he appears to have been taught the art of tent-making; and among the Jews of those days a liberal education was often accompanied by instruction in some mechanical trade. The Jews had a maxim: "he who teaches not his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief." It is probable that S. Paul laid the foundation of his literary attainments at Tarsus, then distinguished as a place of education; and he afterwards studied the Law of Moses, and the traditions

of the elders at Jerusalem, under Gamaliel, a celebrated rabbi.

S. Paul's name is first mentioned in the Acts, in the account of S. Stephen's martyrdom, to which he is said to have consented, and is spoken of as a young man. S. Stephen's death was followed by a severe persecution of the Church at Jerusalem, which is supposed to have lasted four years, from A.D. 34 to 38, and Paul was distinguished among its enemies by his activity and violence. Not content with displaying his hatred to the Gospel in Judea, he obtained authority from the high priest to go to Damascus, and to bring back bound any Christians he might find in the city. His miraculous conversion took place on his journey thither.

Soon after S. Paul was baptized at Damascus, he went into Arabia. When he returned to Damascus, being supernaturally qualified to be a preacher of the Gospel, he immediately entered upon his ministry there.

The boldness and success with which he enforced the truths of Christianity, so irritated the unbelieving Jews, that they resolved to put him to death. The disciples, however, conveyed him privately out of Damascus, and he went to Jerusalem. The Christians of Jerusalem, remembering Paul's former hostility to the Gospel, refused to receive him; but being assured by Barnabas of Paul's real conversion, and of his exertions at Damascus, they acknowledged him as a disciple. He remained only fifteen days among them, and he saw none of the Apostles save Peter and James, for the others were probably exercising their ministry elsewhere. The



zeal with which Paul preached at Jerusalem rendered him so obnoxious to the Hellenistic Jews, that they sought how to kill him. The brethren, therefore, thought it right that he should leave the city. They accompanied him to Cæsarea, and thence he went "into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, where he preached the faith, which once he destroyed."

The conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, having convinced the Apostles that "to the Gentiles also GOD had granted repentance unto life," Paul was soon after conducted by Barnabas from Tarsus, and they both began to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles at Antioch. Here where the first Gentile church was established, the disciples were first called Christians. They had before been called Nazarenes and Galileans. Afterwards, a particular sect of Christians were called Nazarenes.

When these two Apostles had been thus employed about a year, a prophet called Agabus predicted a famine throughout the whole world. The Christians of Antioch, therefore, made a contribution for their brethren in Judea, and sent the money to the elders at Jerusalem, by Paul and Barnabas. This famine happened soon after, in the fourth or fifth year of the Emperor Claudius. It is supposed that S. Paul had the vision mentioned in Acts, chap. xxii. 17, while he was now at Jerusalem the second time after his conversion. Soon after the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, they were separated, by the express direction of the HOLY GHOST, from the other Christian teachers and prophets, for the

purpose of carrying the glad tidings of the Gospel to the Gentiles. Thus divinely appointed to this office, they preached the Gospel successfully at Salamis and Paphos, two cities of the Isle of Cyprus, at Perga in Pamphylia, Antioch in Pisidia, and at Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, three cities in Lycaonia, and then returned to Antioch in Syria. This journey is supposed to have occupied about two years; and in the course of it many Jews and Gentiles were converted to the Gospel. The sermon which Paul preached at Antioch in Pisidia, the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the two miracles which Paul performed at Paphos and at Lystra, the persecutions which he and Barnabas suffered at different places from the unbelieving Jews, are recorded in the Acts.

A dispute having arisen some time afterwards with some Jewish Christians in Judea respecting circumcision, it was thought right that Paul and Barnabas, with others, should go to Jerusalem to consult the Apostles and Elders. They passed through Phœnicia and Samaria, and upon their arrival at Jerusalem, a council was assembled. Peter and James the Less were present, and their sentiments coincided with those of Paul and Barnabas. It was agreed that neither circumcision nor conformity to any part of the ritual law of Moses, was necessary in Gentile converts; but they were recommended to abstain from certain specified things prohibited by that law, lest offence should be given to their brethren of the circumcision. This decision, which was declared to have the sanction of the HOLY GHOST, was communicated to the Gentile

Christians of Syria and Cilicia by a letter written in the name of the Apostles, elders, and whole church at Jerusalem, and conveyed by Judas and Silas, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Antioch for that purpose. Though the Mosaic institution was pronounced by this high authority not to be obligatory upon those who had embraced the Gospel, yet the attachment of the Jewish Christians to their ancient rites, caused frequent dissensions in the Church of CHRIST; and we find that S. Paul frequently conformed to the law of Moses, in compliance with the prejudices of the Jews, that he might make them better disposed to receive the Gospel.

Paul having preached a short time at Antioch, proposed to Barnabas that they should visit the churches which they had founded in different cities. Barnabas consented; but while they were preparing, the dispute arose already mentioned respecting Mark, and they separated. Paul chose Silas for his companion, and they set out from Antioch. They travelled through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches, and then to Derbe and Lystra. Thence through Phrygia and Galatia, but being desirous of going into the Proconsular Asia (that part in which are Ephesus and Miletus,) they were forbidden by the HOLY GHOST. They therefore went to Mysia; and not being permitted by the HOLY GHOST to go into Bithynia, they went to Troas. Here a vision appeared to Paul: "There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, 'Come over into Macedonia and help us.'" Paul knew this to be a command from Heaven, so in obedience

to it, he immediately sailed from Troas to Samothracia, and to Neapolis, a city of Thrace; thence to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia. Paul remained some time at Philippi, preaching the Gospel.

Thence he went through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica, where he preached in the Jewish synagogues three successive sabbaths. . Some Jews, and many Gentiles of both sexes, embraced the Gospel; but the unbelieving Jews, moved with envy, excited a great disturbance in the city, so that the brethren, anxious for his safety, thought it prudent to send him to Berea, where he was better received. The Bereans heard his instructions with attention and candour, and having compared his doctrines with the ancient Scriptures, and being satisfied that JESUS, whom he preached, was the promised Messiah, they embraced the Gospel; but his enemies at Thessalonica, being informed of his success, came to Berea, and by their endeavours to stir up the people against him, compelled him to leave that city also.

He went thence to Athens. Here he was accused before the Court of Areopagus, to which the cognizance of all religious controversies belonged, as being a setter forth of strange gods. Paul defended himself with great eloquence before this august assembly, and in explaining the Gospel doctrines, he introduced the awful subject of the day of judgment, and appealed to our SAVIOUR's restoration to life, as a pledge and assurance that all men will rise from the dead. "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, and others

said, We will hear thee again of this matter;" so Paul departed from among them. However, his preaching was not altogether ineffectual here, for some of the Athenians were converted to the Gospel, and among the rest Dionysius the Areopagite,<sup>1</sup> and a woman of distinction named Damaris.

From Athens Paul went to Corinth, and lived in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, two Jews who had left Rome in consequence of Claudius's edict against the Jews. Like S. Paul, they were tent-makers. He preached to the Jews in their synagogue, but upon their violent opposition, he declared that from that time he would preach to the Gentiles only; and accordingly he afterwards delivered his instructions in the house of one Justus, who lived near the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and his family, and many of the Gentile Corinthians "hearing believed, and were baptized." Paul was in a vision encouraged to persevere in his exertions; and although he was accused by the unbelieving Jews before Gallio, the Roman governor of Achaia, (elder brother of Seneca the philosopher,) he continued there a year and six months "teaching the word of God," and supporting himself by his trade of tent-making, so as not to be burthensome to the disciples. In this time he wrote his two Epistles to the Thessalonians, and probably that to the Galatians. From Corinth Paul sailed into Syria, and thence he went to Ephesus. As it was necessary for him to keep the approaching feast at Jerusalem, after

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius mentions this Dionysius as the first Bishop of Athens.

promising to return to the Ephesians, he sailed to Cæsarea, and is supposed to have arrived at Jerusalem just before the feast of Pentecost. After the feast he went to Antioch; and this was the conclusion of his second apostolical journey, in which he was accompanied by Silas, and in part of it Luke and Timothy were also with him.

After a short stay at Antioch, Paul set out upon his third apostolical journey. He passed through Galatia (probably to learn what effect his epistles had produced, and to correct errors,) and Phrygia, and thence to Ephesus. He found there some who had only been baptized with John's baptism: he directed they should be baptized in the name of JESUS, and then he communicated to them the HOLY GHOST. He preached for three months in the synagogue, but the Jews being hardened beyond conviction he left them, and for about two years he taught in the school of Tyrannus, probably a Gentile. He here wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians, probably early in the year 56; and we learn thence that he supported himself by his own labour at Ephesus, as he had done at Corinth. He performed many miracles here; great numbers of people were converted, and many who had used magical arts, publicly burnt their books, and believed in the Gospel. A tumult was caused by Demetrius, a silversmith, who made images of the goddess Diana, and who feared his idolatrous trade would be ruined, but the chief magistrate dispersed the multitude. Paul had intended to continue at Ephesus till Titus should return, whom he had sent to inquire into the state of the Church at Corinth.

He now thought it prudent to leave, and having taken affectionate leave of the disciples, he set out for Troas. Titus, from some unknown cause, did not join him at Troas, and Paul went to Macedonia, where he met Titus, and sent him back to apprise the Corinthians of his visiting them shortly, and to convey to them his second epistle. After preaching in Macedonia, and receiving from the Christians there liberal contributions for their poor brethren in Judea, he went to Corinth for three months. The Christians of Corinth and of the rest of Achaia, also contributed to the relief of their brethren in Judea. Just before Paul left Corinth, he wrote his epistle to the Romans, probably early in 58. S. Paul's intention was to have gone into Syria, but hearing that some unbelieving Jews lay in wait for him, he changed his plan, passed through Macedonia, and sailed from Philippi to Troas in five days. He stayed here seven days, and preached to the Christians on the first day of the week, the day on which they used to meet for religious worship. The SAVIOUR of the world having risen from the dead on the first day of the week, that day was then appointed to be set apart for the purpose of religious worship, according to the original institution at the creation, to commemorate the emancipation of all mankind from the power of sin and death. As we know that the Apostles acted by inspiration on all occasions where religious doctrines or duties were concerned, it is impossible to doubt their authority upon this point; and this change (from the seventh to the first day of the week,) seems clearly to have been sanctioned by the appearance

of CHRIST in the midst of them, when they were assembled together, and by the descent of the HOLY GHOST, both on the first day of the week.

From Troas Paul went by land to Assos, thence he sailed to Mitylene and Miletus, which latter place was about fifty miles south of Ephesus. Being desirous to reach Jerusalem before the Feast of Pentecost, he sent for the elders of the Ephesian church to Miletus, gave them instructions, and prayed with them. He then sailed by Coos, Rhodes, and Patara, in Lycia, to Tyre. He stayed several days with some disciples he found at Tyre, and thence went to Ptolemais and Cæsarea. Here Paul learnt from a prophecy of the prophet Agabus, that if he went to Jerusalem he would suffer much from the Jews. Paul, however, would not listen to the dissuasions of his friends, but declared that if necessary he was ready to die at Jerusalem for the name of the LORD JESUS. Seeing him thus resolute, they accompanied him to Jerusalem, where he is supposed to have arrived just before the Feast of Pentecost, A.D. 58. This was the end of S. Paul's third apostolical journey.

Paul was received by the Apostles and other Christians at Jerusalem with great joy and affection, but soon after his arrival at Jerusalem, some Jews of Asia seeing him one day in the temple, tried to excite a tumult by crying out that he was the man who aimed to destroy all distinction between Jew and Gentile; who taught things contrary to Moses' law, and who had polluted the temple by bringing in uncircumcised heathens. The enraged multitude dragged Paul out of the temple, beat him, and were



on the point of putting him to death, when he was rescued by Lysias a Roman tribune, the principal military officer. Lysias bound Paul with two chains, but the uproar was too great to learn who he was, or his offence, so he committed him to custody. While conducting him to the castle Antonia, (built by Herod the Great, and named from his friend Mark Antony, but afterwards made a garrison for the Romans,) Paul asked permission to address the people: after relating his former attachment to the Law of Moses, his persecution of the Christians, and his miraculous conversion, he asserted that he was commissioned by God to announce salvation to the Gentiles through faith in the Messiah, but they violently interrupted him, declaring he was not fit to live. Lysias had Paul carried into the castle, and while the soldiers were binding him with thongs for the purpose of examining him by scourging, he informed the centurion attending that he was a Roman citizen. The centurion went to the tribune and advised him to be cautious in what he did to his prisoner. This alarmed Lysias, who had already violated the privileges of a Roman citizen by binding Paul; and he desisted from his design of examining him by torture. The next day "he loosed him from his bands," and brought him before the Sanhedrim, or Jewish council; but great altercation arising, Lysias fearing lest Paul should be pulled to pieces, conducted him back to the castle. That night Jesus appeared to Paul in his sleep and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Lysias being informed that more than forty persons

were conspiring to assassinate Paul, he sent him under a strong guard to Cæsarea, where Felix the Roman Governor resided. Lysias wrote to Felix an explanation of the circumstances respecting Paul. Five days after, Ananias the high priest, with the elders, and an orator, named Tertullus, went to Cæsarea to accuse Paul before Felix. Tertullus stated the charges against him, and Paul made his defence, but Felix said he would inquire more fully into them when Lysias should arrive; and he commanded the centurion to keep Paul as a prisoner at large, and to allow his friends access to him.

It does not appear that Felix ever proceeded in this trial; but he and his Jewess wife Drusilla sent for Paul to hear him "concerning the faith in CHRIST." Drusilla was the daughter of the elder Agrippa, and sister to King Agrippa and Bernice, before whom Paul afterwards pleaded. Paul knowing Felix to be a man of profligate life and corrupt principles, enlarged upon such points as were likely to affect him and his wife, but though the Apostle's discourse caused temporary remorse and some dread of future punishment, it made no lasting impression. He frequently sent for Paul, not to hear the truths of the Gospel explained and enforced, but with the hope that he would offer him money for his release.

In two years Felix resigned the government of Judea to Porcius Festus, and to gratify the Jews, he left Paul a prisoner. Three days after Festus landed at Cæsarea, he went up to Jerusalem; and the high priest and the principal Jews, retaining their malice, requested their new governor to send for Paul. Their intention was to murder him on

the road, but Festus refused, stating that he would shortly try him at Cæsarea. In about ten days Festus went there, and Paul was brought before him the day after; and the Jews who had purposely come from Jerusalem, "laid many and grievous complaints against him, which they could not prove." Paul defended himself by simply declaring that he had been guilty of no offence either against the Law of Moses, or the authority of Cæsar; and availing himself of his privilege as a Roman citizen, he appealed to the Emperor himself. After some deliberation this appeal was granted. Not long after King Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to visit Festus, and Agrippa expressing a desire to hear Paul, he was brought in bonds before him, Bernice, the military officers, and principal persons of the city. After Festus had represented the charges against him, Agrippa, who is said to have been well acquainted with the Jewish and Roman laws, told Paul he was permitted to speak for himself. During his defence, Paul argued so forcibly in support of the Gospel, that Agrippa acknowledged himself almost persuaded to be a Christian, and declared that Paul might have been set free, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar, for after such an appeal, the judge could neither condemn nor release the prisoner.

S. Paul and several other prisoners were delivered to Julius, a centurion, to be conveyed to Rome. S. Luke has recorded this long and dangerous voyage. The vessel was wrecked on the isle of Melita; no lives were lost, and Paul, upon his arrival at Rome, was committed to the care of the captain of the guard. "Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a sol-

dier that kept him. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the LORD JESUS CHRIST, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." Paul converted some Jews resident at Rome, and many Gentiles, and among the rest, several persons belonging to the emperor's household. During S. Paul's imprisonment at Rome he wrote his Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon, and it is probable that he wrote his Epistle to the Hebrews soon after his release. The Scripture history ends with this release of S. Paul from his two years' imprisonment at Rome. The Acts do not contain a complete history of S. Paul even to this period, for before he wrote his second Epistle to the Corinthians, viz. before A.D. 57, he had been five times scourged by the Jews, twice beaten with rods, and thrice shipwrecked, none of which are recorded in the Acts. It seems probable that immediately after regaining his liberty, he went to Jerusalem, and afterwards travelled through Asia Minor, Crete, Macedonia, and Greece, confirming his converts, and regulating the affairs of the different churches which he had planted in those countries. S. Paul probably wrote his first Epistle to Timothy, and his Epistle to Titus, at this time. The opinion that S. Paul preached the Gospel in Spain at this time arose probably from the following passage in his Epistle to the Romans, "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you," but it is not certain whether he ever went into Spain. It was the unanimous tradition of the Church that

S. Paul returned to Rome; that he underwent a second imprisonment there, during which he wrote his second Epistle to Timothy, and at last was put to death by the Emperor Nero. A dreadful fire happened at Rome in the time of Nero, and the emperor was believed to have been himself the author of it. To remove the odium from himself he chose to attribute it to the Christians, and to give colour to that unjust imputation, he persecuted them with the utmost cruelty. In this persecution Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom, probably A.D. 65. Sulpitius Severus, writing A.D. 401, states that the former was crucified, and the latter beheaded.

S. Paul was a person of great abilities, and irreproachable life, he was conversant with Grecian and Jewish literature, and gave early proofs of an active and zealous disposition. As a minister of the Gospel, he displayed the most unwearied perseverance and undaunted courage. He was deterred by no difficulty or danger, and endured a great variety of persecutions with patience and cheerfulness. Though emphatically styled the great Apostle of the Gentiles he began his ministry in almost every city by preaching in the synagogue of the Jews, (for the Jews were by this time so dispersed that there was scarcely any considerable city in which they had not a synagogue,) and though he owed most of his persecutions to the opposition of that proud and obstinate people, yet it rarely happened in any place that some of the Jews did not yield to his arguments, and embrace the Gospel. In the fourteen Epistles which he wrote to individuals or churches are to be found those obscurities which belong to epistolary writing. Many

things are mentioned briefly, many opinions and facts barely alluded to, as being well known to those whom he addresses, but which it is now very difficult to ascertain. He enters upon his subjects abruptly, makes frequent transitions without notice, and answers objections without stating them. He abounds in parentheses, not always to be easily discerned. Though he never departs from the authority of the apostolic character, yet the sensibility of his own heart frequently leads him to appeal to the feelings and affections of those to whom he writes, and the zeal of his temper is so apparent throughout his Epistles, that no one can read them with attention, without catching some portion of that fire by which he was animated.

#### **S. PAUL'S EPISTLES, THEIR GENUINENESS AND ARRANGEMENT.**

OF the fourteen Epistles ascribed to S. Paul in our canon the first thirteen have, in all ages of the Church, been universally acknowledged to be written by that Apostle. Some doubts have been entertained concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews, but these will be explained hereafter.

Clement of Rome, contemporary of the Apostles, expressly ascribes the first Epistle to the Corinthians to S. Paul, and it is quoted by Polycarp: Ignatius and Polycarp both quote the Epistle to the Ephesians; and Polycarp also quotes the Epistle to the Philippians. Both these latter Fathers were also contemporaries of the Apostles. All the thirteen Epistles, except the short one to Philemon, are re-

ferred to by one or more of the Apostolical Fathers, although they do not say that they were written by S. Paul. All the thirteen Epistles, except that to Philemon, are quoted by Irenæus, A.D. 178, Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 194, and Cyprian, A.D. 248, and all without any exception are quoted by Tertullian, A.D. 200, and others extending to the end of the fourth century, while many writers in the second century allude to separate Epistles.

The brevity of the Epistle to Philemon, and the private nature of its subject account for its not being quoted so early or so frequently as S. Paul's other Epistles. Tertullian tells us that it was received by Marcion, who lived in the beginning of the second century, and it was always inserted in every catalogue of the books of the New Testament. Short as it is, it bears strong internal marks of being the genuine production of S. Paul.

The Epistles are not placed in our Bibles in the order in which they were written. The Epistles to Churches are placed before those addressed to individuals. The Epistle to the Romans is placed first, probably because when the Gospel was propagated, Rome was the mistress of the world. The Epistles to the Corinthians are placed next because Corinth was then the capital of Greece. Then comes the Epistle to the Galatians, who were not the inhabitants of a single city, but of a country in Asia Minor, in which several Churches had been founded.

Ephesus was the principal city of Asia Minor. Philippi was a Roman colony, which perhaps caused the Epistle to the Philippians to be placed before those to the Colossians and Thessalonians, whose

By thus declaring that upon some subjects he only delivered his own private opinion, though always under the superintending influence of the HOLY SPIRIT, he plainly implies, that upon other occasions he wrote under the especial authority of GOD Himself, and in this very chapter he says, "Unto the married I commend, yet not I, but the LORD." Hence it follows that the Apostles had some certain method of distinguishing that knowledge which was the effect of Inspiration from the ordinary suggestions of their own reason. In the same Epistle he says, in speaking of the doctrines of the Gospel, "GOD hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit . . . . Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the HOLY GHOST teacheth." In his First Epistle to the Thimotheians, he says, "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but GOD, who hath also given unto us His HOLY SPIRIT." In asserting his own Inspiration, he asserts that of all the other Apostles. In the two last passages quoted, he speaks in the plural number, and in his Epistle to the Ephesians, he expressly asserts the inspiration of himself, and of the other teachers of the Gospel; "Ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of GOD which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit."

The books of the New Testament contain various predictions, many of which have been literally fulfilled, and others are now receiving their completion,



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cities were not distinguished by any particular circumstance. The Epistles to Timothy have the precedence among those which are written to individuals because there are two of them, or because they are the longest, or because Timothy was a favourite companion of S. Paul. Titus was a preacher of the Gospel. Philemon was probably a private Christian. The Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have been placed the last of all S. Paul's Epistles, because some doubts were at first entertained whether it were really written by that Apostle.

#### THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THIS Epistle was written from Corinth, A.D. 58, in the fourth year of the Emperor Nero, just before S. Paul set out for Jerusalem with the contributions which the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia had made for the relief of their poor brethren in Judea. It was written as S. Paul dictated it by Tertius; and was conveyed to Rome by Phœbe, a deaconess of the Church of Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth. It is addressed to the Church at Rome, which consisted partly of Jewish, and partly of heathen converts; and throughout the Epistle it is evident that the Apostle has regard to both these descriptions of Christians.

S. Paul when he wrote this Epistle had not been at Rome, but he had heard an account of the state of the Church in that city from Aquila and Priscilla, two Christians who were banished from thence by the edict of Claudius, and with whom he lived during his first visit to Corinth. Whether any

other Apostle had at this time preached the Gospel at Rome cannot now be ascertained. Among those who witnessed the effect of the first effusion of the HOLY GHOST, are mentioned "strangers of Rome, Jews, and Proselytes," viz., persons of the Jewish religion who usually resided at Rome, but who had come to Jerusalem to be present at the feast of Pentecost. It is highly probable that these men upon their return home proclaimed the Gospel of CHRIST.

But by whatever means Christianity had been introduced into Rome, it seems to have flourished there in great purity; for we learn from the beginning of this Epistle that the faith of the Roman Christians was then celebrated. To confirm them in that faith, and to guard them against the errors of Judaizing Christians, was the object of this letter, in which S. Paul takes occasion to enlarge upon the nature of the Mosaic institution, to explain the fundamental principles and doctrines of Christianity, and to show that the whole human race, formerly divided into Jews and Gentiles, were now to be admitted into the religion of JESUS, indiscriminately, and free from every other obligation.

The Apostle, after expressing his affection for the Roman Christians, and asserting that the Gospel is the power of salvation to all who believe, takes a comprehensive view of the conduct and condition of men under the different dispensations of Providence; he shows that all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, were equally "under sin," and liable to the wrath and punishment of GOD; and that therefore there was a necessity for an universal pro-

pitiation and redemption which were now offered to the whole race of men without any preference or exception by the mercy of Him Who is GOD of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews ; that faith in JESUS CHRIST, the universal Redeemer, was the only means of obtaining this salvation, which the deeds of the Law were wholly incompetent to procure ; that as the sins of the whole world originated from the disobedience of Adam, so the justification from those sins was to be derived from the obedience of CHRIST ; that all distinction between the Jew and Gentile was now abolished, and the ceremonial law abrogated ; that the unbelieving Jews would be excluded from the benefits of the Gospel, while the believing Gentiles would be partakers of them ; and that this rejection of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles were predicted by the Jewish prophets Hosea and Isaiah. He then points out the superiority of the Christian over the Jewish religion, and earnestly exhorts the Romans to abandon every species of wickedness, and to practise the duties of righteousness and holiness which were now enjoined upon higher motives. S. Paul then gives some practical instructions, and commends particular virtues ; and he concludes with salutations, and a doxology.

#### THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CORINTH, situated on the Isthmus which joins Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece, was at this time a place of extensive commerce, and the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. Near it were cele-

brated the Isthmian games, to which the Apostle alludes in this Epistle. Its inhabitants were very profligate, and great admirers of the sceptical philosophy of the Greeks. S. Paul in his first journey upon the continent of Europe, resided at Corinth about eighteen months, and planted a Church, consisting chiefly of heathen converts. After he left this city, some false teachers, who are supposed to have been Jews by birth, endeavoured to alienate his converts by calling in question the authority of his mission, and by ridiculing the simple style of his instructions. They recommended themselves to their hearers by showing indulgence to their prejudices and vices, and by using such eloquence as had great effect upon their minds. Hence arose divisions and irregularities among the Corinthian Christians, totally inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel.

This Epistle was written from Ephesus in the beginning of A.D. 56, during the Apostle's second visit in the second year of Nero's reign, and about three years after S. Paul had left Corinth. The postscript to this Epistle, as printed in our Bibles, states that this Epistle was written from Philippi; but these postscripts make no part of the Apostolical writings, and are not to be depended upon.

The immediate occasion of its being written was to answer some questions which the Corinthians had in a letter proposed to S. Paul; but before entering on that subject, he takes notice of the abuses which prevailed in the Church at Corinth, of which he had received private information.

S. Paul begins with an affectionate address to the Corinthians, and with congratulations upon their having received the HOLY GHOST. He then exhorts to union, condemning the factions into which they had formed themselves; he vindicates his own character, justifies the manner in which he had preached the Gospel to them, and shows the futility of all human learning when compared with the excellency of the Gospel. He directs the Corinthians not to associate with any person of notoriously wicked life, blames them for carrying their disputes before heathen courts of judicature, advising them to settle their differences among themselves, and cautions them against sensual pleasures to which the Corinthians were greatly addicted. S. Paul then proceeds to answer questions which the Corinthians had put to him relative to the marriage state,—and the lawfulness of Christians eating the meat of sacrifices which had been offered to idols; and warns them against making the liberty, which he allows, an occasion of giving offence; he asserts his right as an Apostle to a maintenance from his disciples, although he had never accepted money from the Corinthian converts; and because the false teachers made this disinterestedness a ground of reproach to S. Paul, he points out the superior motives by which the ministers of the Gospel were animated to bear the hardships of their ministry, above those which induced the Greeks to submit to the labour of contending at their public games. He directs that women should not pray or prophesy in public unveiled,—he notices some of their irregularities in celebrating

the LORD's Supper, and he gives an account of the institution of that Sacrament. He then discourses concerning spiritual gifts, and explains the nature of Christian charity; he enumerates the proofs of CHRIST's resurrection, deduces from it the certainty of the general resurrection of the dead, and forcibly answers some objections against it. S. Paul then gives directions concerning the collections to be made for the poor Christians of Judea, promises to visit the Corinthians, and concludes with friendly admonitions and salutations. Although this Epistle relates principally to the then state of the Church at Corinth; the truths and instructions which it contains are of the greatest importance to Christians of every age.

It was sent to Corinth by Titus, who was directed to bring an account to S. Paul of the manner in which it was received by the Corinthians.

#### THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

SOON after the riot caused by Demetrius, S. Paul left Ephesus and went to Macedonia, where he met Titus, who was just returned from conveying S. Paul's First Epistle to Corinth. From Titus Paul learned that his letter was well received by the Corinthian Christians, that the greater part of them had expressed much concern for their past behaviour, that they had given full proof of their attachment to him, but that some still adhered to the false teachers, who continued to deny Paul's apostolical mission. S. Paul therefore thought it

expedient to write again, and this second Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Macedonia within twelve months after the first, and probably in the beginning of A.D. 57; and it was sent to Corinth by Titus, who, with other persons, was returning thither to forward the collections in Achaia for the poor Christians in Judea.

S. Paul writes in his own name, and in that of Timothy, who was now with him in Macedonia, and addresses not only the Christians of Corinth, but of all Achaia. He speaks of the consolations which he had experienced under his sufferings, and of the zeal and sincerity with which he had preached the Gospel; he explains the reason of his not having performed his promise of visiting the Corinthians, and assures them that the delay had proceeded not from fickleness, as perhaps his enemies had represented, but from tenderness towards his converts, to give them time to reform, and that there might be no occasion for treating them with severity when he saw them; he notices the case of a wicked person whom he had formerly ordered to be publicly excommunicated, and on account of his repentance desires that he may be forgiven and restored to communion with the Church; he mentions the success with which he had preached; he enlarges upon the importance of the ministerial office, the faithfulness with which he had discharged his duty, and the excellence of the Gospel doctrines, he cautions them against connections with unbelievers; he expresses great regard for the Corinthians, declares how much concern he had felt on account of the irregularities which had prevailed



among them, and that he rejoiced very much upon being informed of their penitence and amendment; and he exhorts them to contribute liberally for the relief of their poor brethren in Judea. In the latter part of the Epistle he again vindicates his character as an Apostle, and enumerates the persecutions he had undergone. He concludes with exhortations and the benediction in the Name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST.

### THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

GALATIA was part of Asia Minor, and derived its name from the Gauls, who about 240 B.C. took possession of it by force of arms, and settled there.

The Apostle says in the beginning of this Epistle, "I marvel that ye are *so soon* removed from him, that called you into the grace of CHRIST, unto another Gospel." This passage seems to prove that the Epistle was written soon after the Galatians were converted to Christianity. We have seen in the history of S. Paul, that he preached in Galatia A.D. 51, in the course of his second Apostolical journey, and again in the year 53, in his third journey. No mention is made in this Epistle of S. Paul having been twice in Galatia, it therefore was probably written in the interval between his two visits, most likely A.D. 52, while he was at Corinth; or it might have been written in Macedonia, before Paul went to Corinth.

Soon after S. Paul had converted the Galatians to the belief of the Gospel, some Judaizing Christians endeavoured to persuade them of the necessity

of observing the Law of Moses ; they urged, though without foundation, the authority of the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem ; they represented Paul as having only an inferior commission, derived from the Church at Jerusalem, and that even he, in certain cases, had allowed of circumcision. The object of this Epistle, was to counteract the impression made by these false teachers, and to re-establish the Galatians in the true Christian faith and practice.

S. Paul begins, after a salutation, in the name of himself and all the brethren who were with him, by asserting his apostolical mission ; he shows that he learnt the Gospel, not from man, but by immediate revelation from GOD ; and that he entered upon his ministry by divine appointment, without at first even holding any communication with those who were Apostles before him ; that he afterwards conferred with the heads of the Church at Jerusalem, and was by them, upon the fullest conviction, acknowledged to be an Apostle through the special grace of GOD.

S. Paul next proceeds to refute the imputation of inconsistency by stating that he had not compelled his convert and companion Titus, who was a Greek, to be circumcised, and by showing that he had uniformly resisted the Judaizing Christians, and in particular that he had withstood Peter at Antioch, who, through fear of the Jewish Christians, had refused to associate with heathen converts ; he contends that he had always maintained that the Gospel was alone able to save those who believe it, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of JESUS CHRIST ;

he expostulates with the Galatians for having suffered themselves to be seduced by false teachers, and reminds them, that upon their embracing the Gospel and not the Law, they had received the HOLY GHOST; he then proves that the obligation of the ritual part of the Mosaic law is completely abolished, both with respect to Jews and Gentiles; and he contrasts the present defection of the Galatians with their former zeal and affection towards him, and expresses a fear lest he should have preached to them in vain; he earnestly exhorts them to stand fast in the liberty with which CHRIST had made them free, and not to suffer themselves again to be entangled with the bondage of legal ordinances; he points out the moral and spiritual nature of the Gospel in opposition to outward observances; and concludes with various directions and precepts, all tending to the cultivation of practical virtue.

S. Paul wrote this epistle with his own hand, although it was his practice to make use of an amanuensis.

#### THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

EPHESUS, a city of Ionia, and the capital of the Proconsular Asia, was famous for its temple of Diana, which was esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world, and its inhabitants were noted for their superstition and skill in magic. S. Paul preached the Gospel for a short time here, A.D. 53, and in the following year he returned thither, and remained there more than two years. He made many converts to Christianity, who seem to have

been distinguished by their piety. This epistle contains no blame, and its sole object seems to have been to confirm the Ephesian Christians in the true faith and practice of the Gospel. S. Paul wrote it while a prisoner the first time at Rome; and as he does not express in it any hope of a speedy release, which he does in his other epistles sent from thence, it is conjectured that it was written during the early part of his confinement, and probably A.D. 61. It was sent to Ephesus by Tychicus.

This Epistle consists of six chapters; the first three being considered as doctrinal, and the other three as practical. S. Paul, after saluting the saints at Ephesus, expresses his gratitude to GOD for the blessings of the Gospel dispensation, and assures the Ephesians that since he heard of their faith in CHRIST JESUS, and of their love to all Christians, he had not ceased to return thanks for them, and to pray that their minds might be still further enlightened; he points out the excellence of the Gospel dispensation, and shows that redemption through CHRIST is to be ascribed solely to the grace of GOD; he declares the mystery or hidden purpose of GOD to be, that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, should be partakers of the blessings of the Gospel, and that through the goodness of GOD he was appointed to be the Apostle of the Gentiles; he desires the Ephesians not to be dejected on account of his sufferings, and closes this part of the Epistle with an affectionate prayer, and a sublime doxology.

In the last three chapters, S. Paul gives many practical exhortations; and in particular recom-

mends union, purity of manners, veracity and meekness ; he enjoins charity, and forbids licentiousness ; he enforces the duties of wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, and masters ; he recommends watchfulness and firmness, and concludes with a general benediction.

### THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

PHILIPPI, a city of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, not far from the borders of Thrace, was the first place where S. Paul preached the Gospel upon the continent of Europe, A.D. 51, and he made many converts there. He was at Philippi a second time, but nothing which then occurred is recorded.

The Philippian Christians having heard of Paul's imprisonment at Rome, sent Epaphroditus to assure him of the continuance of their regard, and to offer him a supply of money. This Epistle was written in consequence of that kindness ; and it is remarkable for its strong expressions of affection. It appears to have been written A.D. 62, towards the end of his confinement.

S. Paul, after a salutation in his own name, and in that of Timothy, declares his thankfulness to God for having made the Philippians partakers of the blessings of the Gospel, and prays for their further improvement ; he informs them that his confinement had contributed to the furtherance of the Gospel, and declares his readiness to die in its cause, or live for its promotion ; he exhorts them with earnestness to live as it becometh the Gospel of CHRIST, being in nothing terrified by their ad-

concern for the Colossian and other Christians of Phrygia, and cautions them against being seduced from the simplicity of the Gospel, by the subtlety of Pagan philosophers, or the superstition of Judaising Christians ; he directs them to set their affections on things above, and forbids every species of licentiousness ; he exhorts to a variety of Christian virtues, to meekness, veracity, humility, charity, and devotion ; he enforces the duties of wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, and masters ; he inculcates the duty of prayer, and of prudent behaviour towards unbelievers ; and after adding the salutations of persons then at Rome, and desiring this Epistle to be read in the church of their neighbours the Laodiceans, he concludes with a salutation, written as usual with his own hand.

#### THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

It is recorded in the Acts, that S. Paul in his first journey in Europe, preached the Gospel at Thessalonica, the capital at that time of Macedonia, with much success ; but that after a short stay he was driven thence by the unbelieving Jews. Paul went to Berea, and thence to Athens. From Athens he sent Timothy to Thessalonica, to confirm the new converts in their faith, and to inquire into their conduct. Timothy, upon his return, found S. Paul at Corinth. Thence, probably A.D. 52, Paul wrote this Epistle to the Thessalonians ; and doubtless its contents were suggested by the account which he received from Timothy. It is

generally believed that this was written the first of all S. Paul's Epistles, but it is not known by whom it was sent to Thessalonica. The church there consisted chiefly of Gentile converts.

S. Paul, after saluting the Thessalonian Christians in the name of himself, Silas and Timothy, assures them that he constantly returned thanks to GOD on their account, and mentioned them in his prayers; he acknowledges the readiness and sincerity with which they embraced the Gospel, and the great reputation which they had acquired by turning from idols to serve the living GOD; he reminds them of the bold and disinterested manner in which he had preached among them, comforts them under the persecutions which they, like other Christians, had experienced from their unbelieving countrymen, and informs them of two ineffectual attempts which he had made to visit them again; and that, being thus disappointed, he had sent Timothy to confirm their faith, and inquire into their conduct; he tells them that Timothy's account of them had given him the greatest consolation and joy in the midst of his distress, and that he prayed for an opportunity of seeing them again, and for their perfect establishment in the Gospel; he exhorts to purity, justice, love, and quietness, and dissuades them against excessive grief for their deceased friends; hence he takes occasion to recommend preparation for the last judgment, the time of which is always uncertain, and adds a variety of practical precepts. He concludes with his usual benediction. This Epistle is written in terms of high commendation, earnestness, and affection.

**THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.**

It is generally believed that the messenger who carried the former Epistle into Macedonia upon his return to Corinth informed S. Paul that the Thessalonians had inferred, from some expressions in it, that the coming of CHRIST, and the final judgment, were near at hand. The principal design of this second Epistle to the Thessalonians was to correct that error. It was written from Corinth, and probably at the end of A.D. 52.

S. Paul begins with the same salutation as in the former Epistle, and then expresses devout acknowledgments to GOD for the increasing faith and mutual love of the Thessalonians in the midst of persecutions; he represents to them the rewards which will be bestowed upon the faithful, and the punishment which will be inflicted upon the disobedient at the coming of CHRIST; he earnestly entreats them not to suppose, as upon his authority, or upon any other ground, that the last day is at hand; he assures them that before that awful period a great apostasy will take place, and reminds them of some information which he had given them upon that subject when he was at Thessalonica; he exhorts them to steadfastness in their faith, and prays to GOD to comfort their hearts and establish them in every good word and work; he desires their prayers for the success of his ministry, and expresses his confidence in their sincerity; he cautions them against associating with idle and disorderly persons, and recommends diligence and quietness. He adds



a salutation in his own hand, and concludes with his usual benediction.

### THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY was a native of Lystra in Lycaonia, his father was a Gentile, but his mother, Eunice, was a Jewess, and educated her son with great care in her own religion. S. Paul calls Timothy his "own son in the faith," from which it is inferred that Paul converted him to the belief of the Gospel, and as, upon Paul's second arrival at Lystra, Timothy is mentioned as being then a disciple, and as having distinguished himself among the Christians of that neighbourhood; his conversion, as well as that of Eunice his mother, and Lois his grandmother, must have taken place when S. Paul first preached at Lystra, A.D. 46. On leaving Lystra the second time S. Paul took Timothy with him on account of his excellent character and Christian zeal; but Paul caused him to be circumcised, not as a thing necessary to salvation, but to avoid offending the Jews, as he was a Jew by the mother's side. Timothy was regularly appointed to the ministerial office by laying on of hands by S. Paul, and also by the presbytery. He generally attended S. Paul, but was sometimes employed by him in other places; he was very diligent and useful, and is mentioned with great affection by S. Paul, who joins his name with his own in the inscription of six of his Epistles. He is sometimes called Bishop of Ephesus, and it is said that he suffered martyrdom there some years after S. Paul's death. The exact date of this Epistle

is not certainly known. From the third verse of the first chapter, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia," it is generally admitted that S. Paul wrote this Epistle in Macedonia, that he had lately come from Ephesus, and that he had left Timothy in that city. S. Paul states the reason which had induced him to request Timothy to remain, "That thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine; neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying, which is in faith." From this and other passages it is evident that when S. Paul wrote this Epistle some false teachers had been trying to subvert the Ephesian Christians from the genuine doctrine taught by S. Paul. It is not probable such an attempt should have been made, while Paul, who had lately converted the Ephesians, was still among them; for in his first visit he made very few, if any, converts; indeed on his second arrival he seems to have found only twelve disciples, who were so little acquainted with the nature of the Gospel dispensation that they had not so much as heard whether there were any HOLY GHOST; and S. Paul, in his subsequent address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, takes no notice of corruptions subsisting in their Church, although he says, "Hereafter men will arise, speaking perverse things, drawing many disciples after them." From these, and various other considerations, it appears that this Epistle was written after S. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, and as he was liberated A.D. 63, it was probably written A.D. 64. Paul evidently intended to go to Colosse, and into Mace-

donia, for to Philemon, a Colossian, he says, "Prepare me also a lodging, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you;" and to the Philippians he says, "I trust in the LORD, that I also myself shall come shortly." If he executed these intentions after his release it is probable that he would also visit Ephesus, which was near Colosse, and go thence to Philippi. During S. Paul's seven years' absence corruptions might have made their way into the Church at Ephesus, and Paul probably left Timothy to correct what was amiss, with an intention of returning himself to Ephesus, when he had visited the Churches in Macedonia. Though he declared to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, A.D. 58, "that they should see his face no more," yet in the same speech he says, "and now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, *not knowing* the things that shall befall me there, save that the HOLY GHOST witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions await me." Thus he expressly declares the limited nature of Inspiration; and if he did not know the events which awaited him even at Jerusalem, whither he was then going, much less probable is it that he could foresee certainly whether he should ever be again at Ephesus. The declaration therefore "that they should see his face no more" appears not to have been dictated by the HOLY GHOST, but to have been merely the conclusion of his mind after strong intimations of approaching danger. The design of this Epistle was chiefly to give instructions to Timothy concerning the management of the Church at Ephesus, and it was probably intended to be read publicly that the

Ephesians might know upon what authority Timothy acted. After affectionately saluting him, and reminding him for what reason he was left at Ephesus, the Apostle takes occasion from the frivolous disputes, which Judaizing teachers had introduced, to assert the practical nature of the Gospel, and its superiority over the Law; he thanks God for his own appointment to the Apostleship, and recommends to Timothy fidelity in the discharge of his sacred office; he exhorts that prayers should be made for all men, and especially for magistrates; he gives directions for the conduct of women, and forbids their teaching in public; he describes the qualifications necessary for bishops and deacons, and speaks of the mysterious nature of the Gospel dispensation; he foretells that there will be apostates from the truth, and false teachers in the latter times, and recommends to Timothy purity of manners and improvement of his spiritual gifts; he gives him particular directions for his behaviour towards persons in different situations of life, and instructs him in several points of Christian discipline; he cautions him against false teachers, gives him several precepts, and solemnly charges him to be faithful to his trust.

#### THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

FROM internal evidence we learn that S. Paul wrote this Epistle while under confinement at Rome for the second time. In his Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and to Philemon, written during his first imprisonment, he does not

express any apprehension for his life, and in the two latter, he even expresses a confident hope of being soon liberated, but in this Epistle he holds a very different language, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course." The danger in which S. Paul now was, is evident from his friends' conduct, when he made his defence, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me." This expectation of death, and this imminent danger do not agree with the general tenor of his Epistles written during his first confinement at Rome, with the nature of the charge laid against him when he was carried thither from Jerusalem, or with S. Luke's account of his confinement, for in the year 63 Nero had not begun to persecute the Christians; none of the Roman officers at Jerusalem thought that Paul had committed any offence against the Roman government, and so little was he there considered guilty of any capital crime, that he was suffered to dwell "two whole years (that is the whole time of his confinement) in his own hired house, and to receive all that came in unto him, preaching the word of GOD, and teaching those things which concern the LORD JESUS CHRIST, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." S. Paul tells the Colossians that Mark salutes them, and therefore he was at Rome with Paul in his first imprisonment, but he was not there when this Epistle was written, for Timothy is directed to bring him with him. Demas also was with Paul when he wrote to the Colossians, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you." In this Epistle he

says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica." Demas seems to have continued faithful to S. Paul during his first imprisonment which was attended with little or no danger, but deserted him in the second, when Nero was persecuting the Christians, and Paul evidently considered himself in great danger. It is probable therefore that this Epistle was written A.D. 65, not long before his death. It is not certain where Timothy was at that time, but it appears that he must have been in Asia Minor, since Paul desires him to bring the cloak which he had left at Troas. S. Paul, after his usual salutation, assures Timothy of his most affectionate remembrance; he speaks of his own apostleship and of his sufferings; exhorts Timothy to be steadfast in the true faith, to be constant and diligent in his ministerial duties, to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, and to practise and inculcate the great duties of the Gospel; describes the apostasy and wickedness of the last days, and highly commends the Holy Scriptures; he again solemnly exhorts Timothy to diligence, speaks of his own danger, and hope of future reward, and concludes with private directions and salutations.

#### THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

TITUS is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, but we learn from S. Paul's Epistles that he was a Greek. From S. Paul's calling him "his own son according to the common faith," it is concluded that he was converted by him. He is first men-

tioned as going from Antioch to the council at Jerusalem, A.D. 49, and upon that occasion Paul says that he would not allow him to be circumcised, because he was born of Gentile parents. He seems to have been constantly employed by him in the propagation of the Gospel, and he calls him his partner and fellow-helper. Paul sent him from Ephesus with his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and with a commission to inquire into the state of the Church at Corinth; and he sent him thither again from Macedonia with his second Epistle, and to forward the collections for "the saints in Judæa." We hear nothing again of Titus till he was left by Paul in Crete, after his first imprisonment at Rome, to "set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city." During S. Paul's second imprisonment at Rome Titus went into Dalmatia, and after the Apostle's death he is said to have returned into Crete, and to have died there in the ninety-fourth year of his age; he is often called Bishop of Crete by ecclesiastical writers. S. Paul always speaks of Titus in terms of high regard. It is not certain from whence S. Paul wrote this Epistle, but it appears to have been written after his first imprisonment at Rome, and probably in the year '64.

It is not known at what time a Christian church was first planted in Crete, but as some Cretans were present at the first effusion of the HOLY GHOST at Jerusalem, it is probable that upon their return home they might be the means of introducing the Gospel among their countrymen. Crete is said to have abounded with Jews.

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The principal design of this Epistle was to instruct Titus concerning the management of the Churches in the different cities of the island of Crete, and it was probably intended to be read publicly to the Cretans, that they might know upon what authority Titus acted. S. Paul, after his usual salutation, intimates that he was appointed an apostle by the express command of GOD, and reminds Titus of the reason of his being left in Crete; he describes the qualifications necessary for bishops, and cautions him against persons of bad principles, especially Judaizing teachers, whom he directs Titus to reprove with severity; he informs him what instructions to give to people in different situations of life, and exhorts him to be exemplary in his own conduct; he points out the pure and practical nature of the Gospel, and enumerates some particular virtues which he was to inculcate, avoiding frivolous disputes; he tells him how he is to behave towards heretics, and concludes with salutations.

#### THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

PHILEMON was a Colossian, and apparently a person of some consideration in his city. S. Paul seems to have been the means of converting him to the belief of the Gospel. He calls him his fellow-labourer. We learn from this Epistle that it was written when S. Paul was a prisoner, and as he had hope of soon recovering his liberty, it seems to have been towards the end of his first confinement at Rome. Onesimus, the bearer of this Epistle, was one of the persons intrusted with that to the Colos-



sians, and in both Epistles, Timothy, Epaphroditus, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, are spoken of as being present with the Apostle; it seems therefore they were written at the same time, namely A.D. 62. Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, had run away from him and taken up his residence at Rome. Paul converted him to Christianity, and reclaimed him to a sense of his duty: he then sent him back to Colosse with this letter, written with his own hand, to Philemon, requesting him to receive his slave, thus converted and reclaimed, again into his family. This Epistle has always been deservedly admired for the delicacy and address with which it is written, and it places Paul's character in a very amiable point of view. He intercedes for the fugitive with his master in the most earnest and affectionate manner; he speaks of him in terms calculated to soften Philemon's resentment, engages to make full compensation for any injury he might have sustained from him, and conjures him to reconciliation and forgiveness by the now endearing connection of Christian brotherhood. This Epistle proves that Christianity was not intended to make any alteration in the civil conditions of men. Paul considered Onesimus, although converted to the Gospel, as still belonging to his former master; and by deprecating Philemon's anger he acknowledged that Onesimus continued liable to punishment for the misconduct of which he had been guilty previous to his conversion.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THOUGH the genuineness of this Epistle has been disputed, its antiquity has never been questioned. It is generally allowed that there are references to it, although the author is not mentioned, in the works of Clement of Rome, Ignatius and Polycarp, who were contemporaries of the Apostles, and that it contains internal evidence of having been written before the destruction of Jerusalem. The earliest writer now extant who quotes this Epistle as the work of S. Paul, is Clement of Alexandria, in the second century, but as he ascribes it to S. Paul repeatedly and without hesitation, it seems that in his time no doubt had been entertained upon the subject. Clement is followed by Origen, by Dionysius and Alexander, both bishops of Alexandria and many other ancient Fathers, all of whom consider this Epistle as written by S. Paul, and it is ascribed to him in the ancient Syriac version, supposed to have been made at the end of the first century. The persons who doubted its genuineness (being of the Latin Church) were those the least likely to have been acquainted with the Epistle at an early period, from its contents not being so interesting to the Latin Churches, which consisted almost entirely of Gentiles, ignorant probably of the Mosaic law, and holding little intercourse with Jews, while it is evident that this Epistle was generally received in ancient times by those Christians who used the Greek language, and lived in the eastern parts of the Roman empire. The common opinion is that this Epistle was written from Rome, towards the end of

S. Paul's first imprisonment, or immediately after it, because the Apostle expresses an intention of visiting the Hebrews shortly, and therefore the date must have been A.D. 63. It is satisfactory to reflect that those who denied the genuineness of this Epistle, always believed it to have been written or translated by some assistant of S. Paul, and that almost every one admits that it carries with it the sanction and authority of the inspired Apostle. The general opinion is that this Epistle was written to those Christians of Judea who had been converted to the Gospel from Judaism. It appears from the following passage in the Acts, "When the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews," that certain persons were at this time known at Jerusalem by the name of Hebrews. They seem to have been native inhabitants of Judea, the language of which country was Hebrew, and they were so called in contradistinction to those Jews who, residing commonly in other countries, used the Greek language, and were therefore called Grecians.

The design of this Epistle was to confirm the Jewish Christians in the faith and practice of the Gospel, which they might be in danger of deserting; the unbelieving Jews being very numerous and powerful in Judea. The writer begins by declaring to the Hebrews, that the same GOD, who had formerly often spoken to their fathers by means of His prophets, had now sent His only SON to reveal His will; he then describes, in sublime language, the dignity of the person of CHRIST; and thence infers the duty of obeying His commands, the divine

authority of which was established by miracles, and the gifts of the HOLY GHOST; he points out the necessity of CHRIST's Incarnation and Passion; he shows the superiority of CHRIST to Moses, and warns the Hebrews against the sin of unbelief; he exhorts to steadfastness in the profession of the Gospel, and gives an animated description of CHRIST as our High Priest; he shows that the Levitical priesthood and the old covenant were abolished by the priesthood of CHRIST, and by the new covenant; he points out the inefficacy of the ceremonies and sacrifices of the Law, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by the sacrifice of CHRIST; he fully explains the nature of faith; and in the two last chapters exhorts and admonishes the Hebrews to bear trials with patience and constancy. He concludes with his usual valedictory benediction. The arguments used in this Epistle as being addressed to persons who had been educated in the Jewish religion are principally taken from the ancient Scriptures; and the connection between former Revelations and the Gospel, is pointed out in the clearest and most satisfactory manner.

#### THE SEVEN CATHOLIC EPISTLES.

THE Epistle of S. James, the two Epistles of S. Peter, the three Epistles of S. John, and that of S. Jude, are called Catholic or General. Many ancient authors mention them under that name; probably because most of them were written not to particular persons, or to the churches of single cities or coun-

tries, as S. Paul's Epistles were, but to several churches, or to believers in general. Many writers enumerate these Epistles, but not always in the same order. Probably the Epistle of James is placed first, because he was Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, the city where the Gospel was first preached after the ascension of our SAVIOUR, and where the first Christian Church was established; next come the Epistles of S. Peter, because he is considered as the head of the Apostles; then the Epistles of S. John, who was the favourite Apostle of CHRIST, and more distinguished than S. Jude, whose Epistle is placed last.

#### THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF S. JAMES.

THE Evangelists state that there were two Apostles of the name of James, of whom one was the son of Zebedee and brother of John, and the other was the son of Alphæus or Cleophas, which are supposed to be the same name differently written, or different names of the same person. The latter is in the Gospels called James the Less, and the former is distinguished by the name of James the Great, though that appellation is not given him in Scripture. S. Paul mentions one of these two Apostles as the LORD's brother, that is, His near kinsman; and he doubtless speaks of the son of Alphæus, as in other parts of Scripture, he is said to be the brother of CHRIST. The degree of his relationship seems to have been that of cousin; for S. John says, that Mary, the wife of Cleophas, was sister to Mary, our SAVIOUR's mother; and S. Mark writes

that the name of the mother of James the Less was Mary. Among the Jews, persons nearly related were called brothers. James the Less was the author of this Epistle. No particulars are recorded of him in the Gospels, but in the Acts, and in S. Paul's Epistles he is often mentioned with great distinction. He seems to have been appointed by the other Apostles to superintend the Church at Jerusalem, while the rest of the Apostles travelled into other countries. He discharged his duties with such inflexible integrity and holy zeal, that he obtained the surname of James the Just. By ancient writers he is called Bishop of Jerusalem, and is considered as presiding in that character at the council held at Jerusalem, for the purpose of determining whether it were necessary that Gentile converts should be circumcised. He summed up the arguments, and proposed the substance of the decree, to which the whole assembly readily acceded. He was put to death A.D. 62, in a tumult raised by the unbelieving Jews, when there was no Roman Governor in Judæa; Festus being dead, and his successor, Albinus, not yet arrived. James the Less was a person of great discretion, and highly esteemed by the Apostles and other Christians. Such was his reputation for piety and virtue, that it was a common opinion among the Jews, that their sufferings, and the destruction of their city and temple, were owing to the anger of God, excited by the murder of James. Clement of Rome, and Hermas, both contemporaries of the Apostles, allude to this Epistle, and it is quoted by many ancient Fathers. This Epistle is found in the Syriac version, which

was made as early as the end of the first century for the particular use of converted Jews. It is generally believed that this Epistle was written shortly before the death of James, and probably therefore in the year 61. The design of the Apostle was to animate the Jewish Christians to support with fortitude and patience any sufferings to which they might be exposed, and to enforce the genuine doctrine and practice of the Gospel in opposition to the errors and vices which then prevailed among them. Their principal cause arose from a misinterpretation of S. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the Law, that is, as the Apostle meant it, without the observance of the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation; but hence, some had most unwarrantably inferred, that moral duties were not essential to salvation, and had therefore abandoned themselves to every species of licentiousness and profligacy. S. James begins by showing the benefits of trials and afflictions, and by assuring the Jewish Christians that God would listen to their sincere prayers for assistance; he reminds them of their being the distinguished objects of divine favour, and exhorts them to practical religion; to an impartial regard for the poor, and to an uniform obedience to all God's commands, without exception; he shows the inefficacy of faith without works; inculcates the necessity of a strict government of the tongue, and cautions them against censoriousness, strife, malevolence, pride, indulgence of their passions, and rash judgment; denounces threats against those who make an improper use of riches; intimates the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and

concludes with exhortations to patience, devotion, and a solicitous concern for the salvation of others.

#### THE FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE OF S. PETER.

SIMON Peter was born at Bethsaida, a city of Upper Galilee. His father's name was Jonas, and he had a brother called Andrew. He was a married man, and lived at Capernaum, and he and his brother were fishermen upon the Lake of Genesareth. Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist, and hearing him declare JESUS to be the Lamb of GOD, he followed JESUS the rest of that day. Andrew having found his brother, brought him to JESUS, who, when He saw him, said, "Thou shalt be called Cephas," or Peter, "which is by interpretation a stone" or rock. Peter and Andrew continued to carry on their trade of fishing, till CHRIST called them to attend constantly upon Himself, and promised to make them "fishers of men," in allusion to their future success in making converts to the Gospel. They were afterwards appointed of the number of the twelve Apostles. Peter enjoyed the favour of his Divine Master in a peculiar degree. Our SAVIOUR is supposed to have had no other fixed residence, after He began His ministry, but with S. Peter at Capernaum; and probably upon that ground application was made to him for the tribute-money due from CHRIST. On three occasions, only Peter and the two sons of Zebedee were allowed to accompany our SAVIOUR, viz.: when He restored to life Jairus's daughter, when He was transfigured on the Mount, and when



He endured His agony in the garden. Peter and John were sent to prepare the last passover for CHRIST. The angel at the Holy Sepulchre commanded that the disciples, and Peter in particular should be informed of CHRIST's resurrection; and Peter was the first man to whom CHRIST appeared after He rose from the dead. Our SAVIOUR said to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My Church; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." And after His resurrection, He three times earnestly commanded him to feed His sheep. When CHRIST put any question to the Apostles, Peter always gave the answer, and he frequently addressed our SAVIOUR when the others were silent. It was Peter who proposed that another Apostle should be chosen in the room of Judas Iscariot; who preached to the astonished multitude on the day of Pentecost; who questioned Ananias and Sapphira, and miraculously punished their falsehood with instant death; and who spoke in the name of the Apostles, when they were apprehended and accused by the Sanhedrim. Through Peter and John, the Samaritan believers received the HOLY GHOST; but it was Peter alone, who, by the immediate command of GOD, admitted Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, into the Christian faith, and his account thereof convinced the Apostles and other disciples, that "to the Gentiles also GOD had granted repentance unto life." Thus, as S. Peter had been the first Apostle who preached to the Jews, immediately after the descent of the HOLY GHOST, so, about eight years afterwards, he was also the first who preached to the Gentiles in

the house of Cornelius, at Cæsarea. By these means he may be said to have founded the universal Church of CHRIST; and this is supposed to have been the meaning of our LORD's words, "Upon this rock will I build My Church, and I will give thee the keys of heaven;" for by being the first person who explained the Gospel both to Jews and Gentiles after the ascension of our SAVIOUR, he, as it were, opened the doors of heaven to all mankind. He seems to have performed more miracles than any other of the Apostles, for the people "brought their sick for the purpose of having his shadow pass over them." He was miraculously delivered out of prison by an angel. The speech of Peter, at the council of Jerusalem, is recorded, but of no other person except of James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem; and S. Paul tells us, that to S. Peter was committed the Gospel of the Circumcision, whence he is called the Apostle of the Jews, as S. Paul is called the Apostle of the Gentiles. And, lastly, in all the catalogues of the Apostles, the name of Peter stands first. Though these facts may lead us to consider Peter as the most distinguished of the twelve Apostles, yet they by no means prove that he had any superior dignity or jurisdiction over the rest; "One is your Master, even CHRIST; but all ye are brethren." (S. Matth. xxiii. 8.) After the Council at Jerusalem, nothing more is recorded of Peter except that he was at Antioch not long afterwards. We learn from Origen, who lived A.D. 230, that Peter is supposed to have preached to the Jews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia; and that he was crucified at Rome, with

his head downwards by his own desire. This seems to have been done from humility, as not thinking himself worthy to die in the same manner his divine Master had died. CHRIST had foretold that Peter should die by crucifixion; and Peter himself alluded to that prediction. All ancient writers concur in asserting that Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome, in the first persecution of the Christians in the reign of Nero, probably A.D. 65, but at what time he went thither is not known. As John was the Apostle most favoured by our SAVIOUR's affection, so Peter seems to have been considered by Him as the Apostle whose disposition would lead him to be the most active in propagating His religion. Confidence and zeal are conspicuous in his character, but he was sometimes deficient in firmness; yet his voluntary acknowledgment to CHRIST of his being a sinful man, his bitter remorse upon the denial of his Master, and his submission to S. Paul's reproof, are conclusive, that to zeal he added humility. This Epistle is referred to by three of the Apostolical Fathers, and many of the later Fathers. It was believed early in the fourth century, that Babylon, from which S. Peter wrote, signified Rome. It is certain that S. John used Babylon figuratively for Rome in the Revelation. If this be so, its date must be about A.D. 64.

The design of this Epistle is to exhort to practical virtue, to a quiet and blameless life, and to patience and fortitude under distresses and persecutions. S. Peter returns thanks to GOD for the blessing of the Gospel dispensation, which, he observes, had been distinctly foretold by the prophets;

he exhorts to holiness and purity; and represents the passion of CHRIST as pre-ordained before the foundation of the world, and its benefits as extending to all eternity; he proceeds to recommend meekness, self-government, and obedience to magistrates; he enforces the duties of servants, wives, and husbands; he enjoins harmony, compassion, courtesy, a rational knowledge of the Christian faith, and a steady adherence to it under temptation; from a consideration of the last judgment, he inculcates sobriety, devotion, and universal benevolence; and encourages the Christians to bear afflictions with resignation and cheerfulness; in the last chapter he gives directions for the conduct of persons of different ages and situations; recommends mutual subjection, humility, and vigilance; and adds a general benediction and doxology.

#### THE SECOND GENERAL EPISTLE OF S. PETER.

CLEMENT of Rome and Hermas, contemporaries of the Apostles, both refer to this Epistle. It is addressed to the same persons as the former Epistle, to encourage them to adhere to the genuine faith and practice of the Gospel. It was written when the Apostle foresaw that his death was at no great distance; and was probably written from Rome A.D. 65. S. Peter, after saluting the Christian converts, and representing the glorious promises of the Gospel dispensation, exhorts them to cultivate those virtues which would make their election sure; he expresses his anxiety to remind them of their duty at a time when he was conscious of his

approaching end ; he declares the divine origin of the Christian faith, which was attested by a voice from heaven, and by prophecy ; he foretells the rise of false doctrines, and denounces severe judgments against those who shall desert the truth, while they who adhere to it will be spared, like Noah and Lot in former times ; he cautions them against false teachers, represents the certainty of the day of judgment, reminds them of the doctrines which he and S. Paul had inculcated, and exhorts them to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

#### THE FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE OF S. JOHN.

THE unanimous suffrage of antiquity attributes this Epistle to S. John the Evangelist. It is not known to whom it was specially addressed, nor from whence it was written ; but it seems most probable that the Apostle wrote it in Judea, and from internal evidence, viz., the passage, " Even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time " the Apostle seems to allude to the predictions of CHRIST concerning the false teachers who were to appear before the destruction of Jerusalem, which would place the date of this Epistle about A.D. 69. Its principal design was to preserve the Christians in the true faith of CHRIST, in opposition to the erroneous doctrines which had then begun to make their appearance. The Apostle begins by assuring the Christian converts that he had seen and heard everything which he had delivered to them concerning CHRIST ; he declares

that if we walk in light, that is, sincerely endeavour to obey the precepts of the Gospel, the blood of CHRIST will cleanse us from all unrighteousness ; he condemns those who say that they are guilty of no sin, and recommends confession of sins ; he asserts the universality of CHRIST's propitiation ; he states that the knowledge of GOD consists in the observance of His commandments ; he cautions the Christian converts against the love of this world, and against false teachers ; he points out the love of GOD for mankind, and thence inculcates the duty of mutual love among men ; he urges farther cautions against false teachers, and especially against those who deny that CHRIST is come in the flesh ; he repeats his admonitions to mutual love, and to the observance of GOD's commandments ; he pronounces that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," and that "GOD has given us eternal life through His SON."

#### THE SECOND EPISTLE OF S. JOHN.

THIS Epistle is quoted by Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria, who lived in the second century, and therefore its antiquity is unquestionable.

S. John probably adopted the title of Elder in the inscription, as being a term of honourable distinction in the Primitive Church. It is not certainly known to whom it was addressed, but seems to have been written to some lady of eminence, styled Elect on account of her distinguished piety. The design of it was to caution the lady against those false teachers who asserted that CHRIST was

not a real man, but only a man in appearance; and that He did not actually suffer what He seemed to suffer. This doctrine the Apostle condemns in very severe terms, as being destructive of the Atonement of CHRIST; and he recommends that no countenance should be given to those who maintain it; he inculcates also the necessity of obedience to the commandments of GOD, and of mutual love and benevolence among Christians. From the similarity between this and the former Epistle, it is supposed to have been written about the same time, namely, A.D. 69.

#### THE THIRD EPISTLE OF S. JOHN.

IGNATIUS, contemporary of the Apostles, is supposed to have referred to this Epistle; and it is mentioned by many of the later Fathers. It is supposed to have been written soon after the two former, and this and the second Epistle are believed to have been written from Ephesus: several persons of the name of Caius (or Gaius) are mentioned in the New Testament; and in the ancient history of the Church, we meet with three bishops of that name, all of whom are said to have been contemporary with S. John; but it is impossible to ascertain whether to any of these persons this Epistle is addressed. S. John commends Caius for having shown kindness to some Christians as they passed through the place where he resided; censures Diotrephes, who had arrogantly assumed some authority to himself, and praises the good conduct of Demetrius. It is not known who these two latter

were. These Epistles are wrongly called *Catholic*, as they are written to private persons.

#### THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF S. JUDE.

JUDAS or Jude, called also Lebbæus and Thaddæus, was the son of Alphæus, or Cleophas, the brother of James the Less, the first cousin of our SAVIOUR, and one of the twelve Apostles. Except in the catalogue of the Apostles, he is only once mentioned in the Gospels: "Judas saith unto Him, (not Iscariot,) LORD, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not to the world?" Jude is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. This Epistle is quoted by Clement of Alexandria in the second century, and most of the later Fathers. It is addressed to all Christians. From the passage, "Remember ye the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our LORD JESUS CHRIST: how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts;" it is evident that this Epistle was written some time after those of S. Peter and of S. Paul to Timothy, in which these prophecies are contained, and therefore its date is believed to be about the year 70. S. Jude, after saluting the Christian converts, and praying for blessings upon them, exhorts them earnestly to contend for the faith as delivered to the Saints, in opposition to the false teachers; he reminds the Christians of GOD's severe judgments inflicted upon the apostate angels and unrighteous men of former times; from these examples he warns them against



adopting the seducing principles of those who were trying to pervert them from the truth, and denounces woe against all persons of impious and profligate character; he reminds them of the predictions of the Apostles concerning mockers in the last days, and exhorts them to preserve themselves in the true faith and love of GOD, and to use their best exertions for the recovery of others. He concludes with an animated doxology.

#### THE REVELATION OF JOHN THE DIVINE.

THE earliest author now extant, who mentions this book, is Justin Martyr, who lived about sixty years after it was written, and he ascribes it to S. John. So does Irenæus, whose evidence is sufficient; for he was the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of John himself; and he expressly tells us, that he had the explanation of a passage in this book from those who had conversed with S. John, the author. The omission of this book in some of the early catalogues of the Scriptures, was probably owing to its obscurity and mysteriousness being thought to render it less fit to be read publicly and generally. The appellation of Divine was first given to S. John by Eusebius, who lived A.D. 315, to intimate that the system of divine counsels was more fully revealed to him, than to any other prophet of the Christian dispensation. S. John was banished to Patmos in the latter part of Domitian's reign, and he returned to Ephesus on the death of that Emperor, A.D. 96. As he states that these visions

appeared to him in that island, we may consider this book as written in the year 95 or 96.

In the first chapter S. John asserts the divine authority of his predictions ; addresses himself to the Churches of the Proconsular Asia, and describes the first vision, in which he is commanded to write the things then revealed to him. The second and third chapters contain seven Epistles to the seven Churches in Asia ; namely, of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, which relate chiefly to their then respective circumstances. At the fourth chapter the prophetic visions begin, and reach to the end of the book. They contain a prediction of all the most remarkable events in the Christian Church from the time of the Apostle to the final consummation of all things.

Sir Isaac Newton observes, " GOD gave these and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosity by enabling them to fore-know things, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the events, and His own providence, not that of the interpreter, be manifested thereby to the world."

"To explain this book," says Bishop Newton, "perfectly, is not the work of one man, or of one age ; but probably it never will be clearly understood, till it is all fulfilled."

It is graciously designed that the gradual accomplishment of these predictions should afford, in every succeeding period of time, additional testimony to the divine origin of our Holy Religion.

Such is the history of the New Testament ; and that the books which contain this history were written, and immediately published, by persons

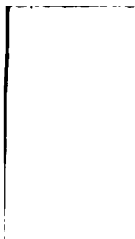
contemporary with the events, is fully proved, by the testimony of an unbroken series of authors, from the days of the Evangelists to the present times; by the concurrent belief of Christians of all denominations; and by the unreserved confession of avowed enemies to the Gospel. The writings of the ancient Fathers of the Christian Church are thus invaluable, for they contain not only frequent references and allusions to the books of the New Testament, but also such numerous professed quotations from them, that it is proved, that these books existed in their present state a few years after CHRIST'S appearance in the world. No unbeliever in the Apostolic age, in the age immediately subsequent to it, or indeed in any age whatever, was ever able to disprove the facts recorded in these books; and it does not appear, that in the early times any such attempt was made. But if all the various and minute circumstances in the history of JESUS exactly accord with the predictions of the Old Testament relative to the promised Messiah, it follows that JESUS was that Messiah. And again; if JESUS really performed the miracles as related in the Gospels, and was perfectly acquainted with the thoughts of men, if He really foretold His own death and resurrection, the descent of the HOLY GHOST, its miraculous effects, the sufferings of the Apostles, the call of the Gentiles, and the destruction of Jerusalem, it follows that His Mission was Divine, and that He spake by the authority of GOD Himself. These, and many other arguments, founded in the more than human character of JESUS, in the rapid propagation of the Gospel, in the excellence of its precepts and doctrines, and in the constancy,

intrepidity, and fortitude of its early professors, incontrovertibly establish the truth and divine origin of the Christian Religion, and afford to us, in these latter times, the most positive confirmation of the promise of our LORD, that "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

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**THE PLACES AND TIMES OF WRITING THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.**

		A.D.
S. Matthew . . .	Judea . . . . .	38
S. Mark . . . .	Rome . . . . .	65
S. Luke . . . .	Greece . . . . .	63
S. John . . . .	Asia Minor . . . .	97
Acts . . . . .	Greece . . . . .	64
Romans . . . .	Corinth . . . . .	58
1 Corinthians . .	Ephesus . . . . .	56
2 Corinthians . .	Macedonia . . . .	57
Galatians . . .	Corinth or Macedonia	52
Ephesians . . .	Rome . . . . .	61
Philippians . . .	Rome . . . . .	62
Colossians . . .	Rome . . . . .	62
1 Thessalonians .	Corinth . . . . .	52
2 Thessalonians .	Corinth . . . . .	52
1 Timothy . . .	Macedonia . . . .	64
2 Timothy . . .	Rome . . . . .	65
Titus . . . . .	Greece or Macedonia.	64
Philemon . . . .	Rome . . . . .	62
Hebrews . . . .	Rome . . . . .	63
S. James . . . .	Jerusalem . . . .	61
1 S. Peter . . . .	Rome . . . . .	64
2 S. Peter . . . .	Rome . . . . .	65
1 S. John . . . .	Judea . . . . .	69
2 S. John . . . .	Ephesus . . . . .	69
3 S. John . . . .	Ephesus . . . . .	69
S. Jude . . . . .	Unknown . . . . .	70
Revelation . . . .	Patmos . . . . .	95 or 96



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